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Evangelical Principles

DOCTRINAL PAPERS EXPLANATORY

OF THE

POSITIVE PRINCIPLES OF EVANGELICAL

CHURCHMANSHIP

Edited by the

REV. EDWARD GARBETT.

EVANGELICAL PRINCIPLES.

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A SERIES OF

DOCTRINAL PAPERS EXPLANATORY OF THE POSITIVE PRINCIPLES OF EVANGELICAL CHURCHMANSHIP.

EDITED BY THE

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With Introduction.



LONDON:

WILLIAM HUNT AND COMPANY,

HOLLES STREET, CAVENDISH SQUARE;

AND AVE MARIA LANE, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1875.

141. j. 283.

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Introduction.

SEVERAL reasons have concurred to suggest the series of papers on Evangelical Principles, which are now collected together in this volume. A statement of truth on its positive side is ever valuable in itself, for the instruction of those who are ignorant of it, and the confirmation of those who already love it. It is the more necessary in an age of controversy like the present, from the natural tendency of the human mind rather to protest against the false, than to inculcate and elucidate the true; for, since there is no system of belief wholly without its difficulties, it is ever easier to expose the weak points of an opponent's argument than to remedy the defects of one's own. Yet positive truth alone can become the spring either of intellectual conviction or of spiritual motives. The soul's life depends not upon the error it avoids, but on the doctrines it actively accepts. Doctrinal orthodoxy may be cold as an iceberg. Direct and positive doctrine alone can take hold of the heart, and filling it with divine love, direct by its own spontaneous action the outgoings of its life.

A further reason arises from the necessities of modern controversy. It is of the utmost possible importance to the Church of England, amid the throes of her present agitation, that the various orthodox sections of the Church should be able to understand and appreciate each others opinions. It is not too much to say, that the Church of England is in danger of being ruined by the inexplicable alienation of the High Church section from the Evangelical section of her members. Were the two combined, as they are in substantial unity of faith, and therefore should be in practical identity of action, the sacerdotal Ritualism now dividing the Church would become powerless for mischief. Not only do not High Churchmen take any active steps to resist its encroachments, but on practical questions they generally throw their influence against those who resist them. They regard, with almost avowed dislike, the Evangelicals with whom they are united on the great doctrines of the faith, and throw the shelter of their support over the school, whose practices they dislike and whose doctrines they condemn. Various influences no doubt concur to produce this perilous anomaly, and among others a sensitive jealousy over the comprehensiveness of the Church, and an excessive fear lest any section of her members should be driven from her pale. But another influence is also at work,

and has been prominently forced upon the attention of thinking men during recent Church Congresses. It consists of a deep and wide-spread misapprehension, on the part of High Churchmen, of the principles and tendencies of Evangelical Churchmen. It has been thought by many that Evangelical Churchmen have no Church principles, and are little better than Nonconformists within the Church. It is needless to say that this is a total and absolute mistake. The Evangelical members of the Church of England are as firm and as faithful Churchmen as any within her pale, and yield to none in the sincerity of their attachment to the apostolic order of the Church, as well as to her apostolic doctrines, and in their desire to maintain it unimpaired. The existence of misapprehensions, all the more powerful because their influence is unconscious and unintentional, renders it important that a clear statement of Evangelical principles should be issued.

Nothing can more powerfully tend to promote the unity of the Church, than the removal of mutual misapprehensions and mutual prejudices among her members. Precious as that unity is, it cannot be secured by any compromise of conviction. Variations of opinion and conflicting tendencies have ever existed in the Church since the Reformation, spite of the distinctness and precision with which her doctrinal

Articles assert the great outlines of "the faith once delivered to the saints," and they must ever be expected to exist. It is not practicable, neither is it desirable, to blur and confuse the broad lines which divide them. But considering the great mass of belief which all orthodox Churchmen hold in common, there is no reason why the frankest mutual respect and confidence should not exist among them. Unity of affection will be found to supply a much more powerful attraction, than any dead-level and unvaried monotony of opinion.

These reasons rendered it very desirable that some steps should be taken to satisfy the prevalent and loudly expressed wish for a public statement of Evangelical Principles. It was necessary that it should not proceed from any single man, but from a group of men associated for the common purpose. The writers of the following tractates are not, in any formal sense, Representatives of the school to which they belong. No caucus has nominated them for this purpose; no delegacy has been entrusted to them. Nor were any Editorial instructions issued, with the exception of regulations as to the length not to be exceeded, and the general character of the treatment which it was desired that the various subjects should receive. Each writer was left perfectly free to express his own convictions, and to support them by his own arguments; and each

writer, and no one whatever but himself,—not even the Editor,—is responsible for the contents of his own tractate. In another aspect, however, all the writers are representative men. They will be recognised as among the leading minds of the school to which they belong, and among those best known in the theological literature of the day. Their united opinions therefore represent the present condition of Evangelical belief more fully and fairly than could be secured by any other method.

The expectations, leading to the adoption of this course, have not been disappointed. With a generous latitude of opinion on secondary questions, an entire unanimity of conviction on the great essentials of belief will be found to pervade the whole of this volume. Three great distinctive principles are conspicuous in every one of the tractates, and may be taken to mark the line of demarcation separating the principles distinctly Evangelical from the principles held by Evangelicals in common with other sections of the Church.

The first is the personal contact of the soul with God, in distinction to the corporate conception of the Church, which holds that the life of Christ is communicated in the first place to the body, the Church, and thence is communicated again to individual members of it. Whatever may be the ideal in the Divine mind, the embodied shape in which it is

presented to us is the conversion and sanctification of the individual soul, by the direct and immediate operation of God the Spirit. Souls are brought into a state of salvation, and then are added to the Church. (Acts ii. 47.) They are not saved because they are members of the Church, but they are members of the Church because they are saved. The common idea involved in the word "Church," receives in Scripture five different appropriations, as is shown with great clearness by Professor Bannerman, in his work on "The Church of Christ:" the Church invisible, the Church visible, the Church local and sectional, the Church national, and the Church as represented by her officers; but the conception is the same throughout. When the Church of England affirms in her nineteenth Article that "the Church is the congregation of faithful men," she evidently places the beginning of the Divine work in the individual soul. The faithful must be gathered, before the Church consisting of them can exist. There is nothing in this view to interfere with the conception of the Church as an organized society, or with a dutiful reverence to her just authority; but it adjusts the relation of the soul towards the Church, and the Church towards the soul, and vindicates the personal and immediate nature of the soul's contact with God, from conversion to glorification, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The second principle is the sovereignty of God the Holy Ghost in contrast with the view which limits His ordinary working to ordinances and sacraments. All will admit the power of God, the Spirit, to work according to His own will. But how is it His will to work? Does He attach His grace to sacraments, so that, in the absence of some positive impediment, the inward and spiritual grace may always be expected to follow the outward visible sign, without being absolutely tied to it, as in the *opus operatum* of the Church of Rome? Or does He work by sacraments or work without them, according to His own pleasure, so as to conserve the freedom of His operations, avoid the possibility of their being confounded with the agency of man, and show that the excellency of the gift is altogether of Himself. Evangelical theology is based upon the latter of the two alternatives. There is nothing in it to prevent the most reverent appreciation of the greatness and dignity of sacraments. It subordinates them only to the agency of God Himself; but it does so subordinate them, and modifies beyond all doubt the relative position and proportion assigned to them in the economy of grace.

The third principle is the sole High Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, in contrast with the sacerdotal view of the Christian ministry which, maintaining the

singleness of the meritorious sacrifice, yet maintains also its re-presentation before God by the hands of the earthly priest. There is not only one sacrifice for sins, but there is one offering of the sacrifice, and that was completed on the cross by the Lord Himself. Anything beyond this we hold to be a profane usurpation of the office of the Son of God. The earthly worship of the Church of Christ includes neither priest, nor altar, nor sacrifice. It seems to us an act of inexplicable perversity to insist on using either of these terms, and a palpable act of unfaithfulness to the teaching, and to the plain intentions of the Church of England.

These three doctrines,—the personal and direct contact of the individual soul with God the Father, the freedom and sovereignty of God the Holy Ghost, and the sole High Priesthood of God the Son,—are the cardinal principles of the Evangelical creed, its distinctive characteristics. So far as a theology is impregnated with them, it becomes an Evangelical theology. So far as they prevail in it, a school of belief is brought into harmony with the pure teaching of catholic and primitive antiquity, and above all with the authoritative declarations of the Word of God. They all three affect immediately and intimately the mode of a sinner's justification before God, and the ground of

his access; and they are not, therefore, abstract propositions, but great operative principles. They are the crucial questions of modern controversy. I venture to believe that, while the third is the very centre and pivot of the present agitation in the Church,—and for this reason alone I have placed it last in order,—the two former have already prevailed greatly within the last few years, and are constantly receiving wider and deeper recognition. I do not mean to assert, for a moment, that the practical acceptance of them is general in the Church, but only that they are much more widely, and in many cases unconsciously, accepted than they were twenty years ago. In evidence of this I point to the prominence now given by a large section of High Churchmen to the doctrine of personal Conversion, and the common use of words, such as "Conversion" and "the Gospel," formerly regarded with dislike. In evidence of the wider acceptance of the great truth of the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit, I point to the wide adoption of Missions, and the recognition not only of lay agency, but even of lay preaching. In the public conferences of the Church, as at recent Church Congresses, the Person and Office of God the Holy Ghost have received prominent attention, and have called out a solemn strength and earnestness of devotion, most encouraging, while the interest excited in

the growth of the spiritual life in the soul has been truly remarkable. May we hope that, from amid the throes of the present emergency, the doctrine of the sole and unchangeable (untransferable, *ἀπαράβατον*) Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ will rise into undisputed prominence, the central hope and living spring of the Church's life.

In maintaining these principles we believe ourselves to follow the true teaching of the Church of England, as the Church in her turn follows the teaching of the Word of God. The propositions I have stated are not indeed to be found in this exact form in any of her Articles, because the doctrinal tendencies of that date did not call for it. But they are involved, in the fullest manner, in such Articles as the eleventh, thirteenth, twenty-fifth, and thirty-first. We, who are Evangelical Churchmen, believe ourselves to be the true children of the Church of England, and we wish for no other platform of faith and practice than has been afforded us, through the good hand of our God upon us, in her Scriptural formularies.

EDWARD GARBETT.

Christ Church Vicarage,
May 13th, 1875.

The Rule of Faith.

BY THE

REV. EDWARD GARBETT, M.A.

I.

THE RULE OF FAITH.

THE necessity for some fixed rule, by which the faith once committed to the saints might be defined, was early experienced in the Christian Church.

If we throw ourselves back into the position of the early believers, we shall readily understand how it arose. The first preachers of Christianity were the twelve Apostles. Their appointment by our Lord to preach, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," preceded by many months the appointment of the seventy, for the former took place towards the latter part of the second year, and the latter about the middle of the third year of our Lord's ministry. The same precedence was maintained after Christ's ascension. The Pentecostal gift of the Holy Ghost was not indeed confined to the Apostles. Not of the twelve alone, but of the whole body of the disciples with whom they were associated, it is recorded, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other

tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." (Acts ii. 6.) But amid this company of inspired men, the twelve Apostles at once stood forward in the front. The sermon of St. Peter, delivered on the day of Pentecost, was the first product of their inspiration, and the three thousand souls, "added to them," were the first-fruits of that spiritual harvest which has been gathered in during every subsequent age of the Church, and is still incomplete. While the miraculous gift was still fresh, the twelve Apostles, thus distinctly marked out from other men, must have constituted the first and innermost circle of Christian preachers.

While this lasted, there could have been no risk of diversity, still less of inconsistency, in the substance of the doctrine they preached. They still retained indeed their characteristic differences of mental constitution, temperament, style, and stand-point, which belonged to them before; for we find these peculiarities still apparent in their writings. Their liability to human temptations remained likewise, and the consequent danger of personal inconsistencies of conduct with the truths they preached; as we see in the case of St. Peter, when he was openly rebuked by St. Paul before the assembled Church of Antioch, and perhaps in the case of St. Paul in his dispute with Barnabas. But in their teaching they were under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit of God, according to the promise of their Master, "He will guide you into all truth." (John xvi. 13.) The truths they taught, however

variously presented, as each man exercised his characteristic gifts under the guidance of the one and the same Spirit, must have been in themselves one and the same.

But we cannot doubt that other members of the company, on which had been bestowed the gifts of the Holy Spirit, were immediately associated with them in their work. No special mention is made indeed of the seventy disciples, who had been sent forth to preach by their Master with much the same commission, as had been previously entrusted to the twelve. But we naturally associate them with that group of persons whom St. Peter described, as those "which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us," and from whom Matthias was chosen by lot to fill the place of the traitor Judas. These would naturally furnish the next circle of Christian preachers. As they had received the same gift of the Holy Ghost, there must have prevailed among them the same harmony of teaching. The danger of diversity of doctrine, if slightly increased by this extension of the pastorate, must still have been comparatively small.

But this state of things could not have lasted long, probably not for many days. The time had come when the Church should be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. Souls were born at the same time both of water and of the Spirit of God. Thus, when St. Peter preached to the company of Gentiles assembled at the

house of Cornelius, we are told that "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the Word." He descended no doubt in His ordinary influences of sanctifying and enlightening grace, but they were accompanied with His extraordinary influences likewise, for "they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost, for they heard them speak with tongues." So the disciples at Ephesus, who had been baptized into John's baptism, were asked by St. Paul, "Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" Men so endowed, however much they may have fallen short of Apostolic inspiration, must be supposed to have been men converted, and enlightened by the Spirit of God. From these men was gathered the next, and wider circle of Christian preachers. First came the twelve Apostles; next to them must have stood the seventy; next, those who were taught of the Apostles or the seventy, and who themselves converted men, would faithfully reflect in their own teaching, when "they went forth everywhere preaching the Word," the instruction they had received. With this circle the danger of false teaching increased, but it was still small compared to what it subsequently became. The Apostles were at hand to correct mistakes, and to supply deficiencies. The Gospel delivered must still have been uniform and consistent.

But the case became very different as the circle of preachers widened more and more, and they became

further and further removed from the Fountain of Truth and the inspired Apostles. As they received their knowledge second-hand, or third-hand, or fourth-hand, the liability to error manifestly increased. The men specially inspired to teach the Church were labouring separately, far away from each other, and not always within reach of communication, even by letter. A central body was indeed maintained for a time at Jerusalem, but this also was soon broken up. The difficulty of maintaining the doctrinal purity of the Gospel must have become enormous, even if there had been no preachers but those who were converted men. But the same growth which carried Christianity into all parts of the known world, must have opened also a wide door to the entrance of insincere persons,—of persons sincere, but ill-taught, and with ill-regulated minds,—of worldly persons, who sought to make gain into godliness, and acquire reputation and wealth by attaching themselves to the new kingdom, which, cut out of the mountain without hands, was fast filling the earth. The acts of justice which checked the evil, by a special penalty, in the case of Ananias and Sapphira, and which rebuked it in the case of Elymas the sorcerer, were in its nature exceptional. There were men like the exorcists at Ephesus, who sought to make a business out of the miraculous powers of Christianity; men who brought their own vile passions into the Church, like the incestuous persons at Corinth; men who sought to pervert it into a reformed Judaism, like the false

teachers in Galatia; men who disfigured it with a philosophy, as false as vain, like those against whom St. Paul warned the Colossians; men who denied that Jesus Christ was come in the flesh, like those denounced by John; men who turned the grace of God into lasciviousness, "denying the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus," like those on whom Jude uttered his indignant condemnation. Corruptions of doctrine were many. False Christs and false prophets abounded. There is not an inspired Epistle which does not bear witness to the fact. Amid all this growing mass of doctrinal and moral corruption, this Babel of errors, where were certainty and security to be found? The Apostles were removed; the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit were slowly, but surely, dying out. What wonder if men's hearts failed in them, and they yearned for a Rule of Faith,—an anchor which should keep the Church from drifting on the sand-bank, or being swallowed up amid the waves?

The state of things, thus produced, has constituted the habitual condition of the Church ever since. The conflict raised by corruption of doctrine against simplicity of truth has been both more sustained and more dangerous than the conflict raised by external persecution against faith. The outward circumstances of the Church have altered; her relations towards the world have been modified; the precise nature of her temptations has varied; but her general condition has never ceased to be that of inward controversy. A definite tradition of

revealed truth has survived in an atmosphere of human disputation, produced by corruption and insincerity of motive, and by variation of opinion. In this respect, the condition of the Church in the nineteenth century of the Christian era presents, in an intenser form and on a wider area, the same features as the Church of the second century. And as the circumstances are analogous, so the experienced want is the same. We, too, need a Rule of Faith, fixed and definite, which, like a beacon built on the solid rock, and lifted up on high, may throw its steady light on the shifting waves below. Could this Rule of Faith vary from age to age, it would but aggravate the difficulties which need to be remedied. If it be permanent and unalterable, the very fact of its abiding existence from age to age would invest it with the greater authority, as time wore on, and everything was found to fluctuate except itself. It would thus gain increased power, as the conflict of belief, ever deepening from the closer contact of man with man, and the increasing activity of the world's intellectual life, made it increasingly necessary. Its very fixity would witness to its Divine authorship, and reflect before the world the attribute of the Divine unchangeableness.

In thus tracing back the Rule of Faith to its historical origin, and showing by what a natural necessity the Christians of the post-Apostolic age were led to seek it, I by no means resolve the establishment of this Rule of Faith into a matter of human convenience. The mind of God foresaw the necessity, and provided for it.

The human experience was but an instrument in His hand for the accomplishment of His purpose. The instrumentality was that of man, stimulated by circumstances; but the design and the deed were really those of God. The Divine agency is made the more remarkable in the process which followed, because no one person or set of persons, no one place or definite date, can be assigned to the establishment of the Canon of Scripture. A moral compulsion was brought to bear upon the whole Church, and from the pressure of the common want arose the common effort to satisfy it. Just as among ourselves, the exigencies of controversy drive us continually back to a closer examination of the Word of God than human indolence might of itself be disposed to undertake; so, as the Apostles and their immediate successors passed gradually away, a similar necessity drove the Christians of the second century to the recognition of a Rule of Faith, which they might not otherwise have sought. Had the Church existed in a state of ideal perfection, it would evidently have been unnecessary. Through the strife and agitations of the times, the eye of faith recognizes the form of God, so directing the storm as to provide a guide to His Church for all time, unerring and immutable as Himself.

When the necessity for some fixed and common Rule of Faith once became felt, one conceivable process alone presented itself by which it could be supplied. The Apostles no longer lived. But it was known that writings emanating from some of their number, and

from men who had lived in intimate intercourse with them, and had written under their superintendence, survived here and there in the Church. Whatever authority had attached to the teaching of the living Apostles, was evidently attached equally to the writings of the dead Apostles, because the death of the men could in no possible way diminish the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God, under which they had spoken and written. Their death cut off the supply of such writings, and made it impossible that any more should be added to the number; but it did not weaken the authority of what remained, as God-inspired Scripture. Thus, being dead, they yet spoke, and will continue to speak to the end.

Could all the extant writings of these specially-inspired men be collected together, the pressing want would so far be supplied, although it would yet remain to be seen how far the completed collection would suffice for all the Church's wants. To bring them together was the first thing to be done, and to take care that no really inspired writings that were extant should be absent from the collection, and that none which were not really inspired should find a place in it. Even the Churches which had been favoured with letters from the Apostles, or put in trust with the narratives of the Evangelists, felt the common impulse; for the portions of Scripture they possessed would supply some of their wants, but not all; answer some of the questions by which they were troubled, but not all. We know this to have been

the case; for some parts of the whole harmonious body of the Faith are to be found in one Epistle, and other parts in another. They would naturally think it possible that the special difficulty they were anxious to remove might be solved in the letter sent to some other Church, though it was not solved in the letter sent to themselves. They would therefore compare portion with portion, narrative with narrative, letter with letter. The instructions of St. Paul, that the Laodicean and Colossian Churches should thus interchange the letters severally addressed to them, would furnish a natural precedent to others besides themselves. When they found, by the comparison, that these Apostolic remains were not tautological repetitions of each other, but mutually supplementary and mutually consistent, they would naturally retain them altogether, as a connected body of teaching. The process involved much inquiry, and needed the greatest caution; for the atmosphere of the Church was full of spurious writings, even at that time. No less than seventeen forged Gospels, and eighteen spurious Acts and Epistles existed in the first century. To examine the pretensions of each one, weigh the evidence for or against, discriminate the various claims to authenticity, was a great work, and must have been a prolonged one. That it should be rapidly accomplished, was against the nature of things. The process needed to be cautious and laborious, and was therefore necessarily slow.

This was the more so, because the Providence of God

engaged the whole Church in the work, instead of committing it to any one branch of it, any one man in it, or any one council of men. It appears to me, that the claim, which the Canon of Scripture has upon the implicit acceptance of Christian men, is greatly enhanced by this circumstance. For written, as the books of the New Testament are, by different writers, and occupied as these writers were during their life-time in different parts of the world, the facts bearing on the authenticity of all the New Testament books could scarcely lie within the knowledge of any particular Church. The decision of any one body of men, on a question so wide, and so vital to the interests of the whole Church, would consequently have been ever liable to suspicion. I can conceive no critical process so exhaustive, or so close, as that to which the New Testament books must actually have been submitted. The jealous vigilance exercised would be increased by the mutual misapprehensions and mistrusts, which, in the weakness of human nature, one local Church might not unnaturally entertain of another. The sensitiveness with which each one would watch over the claims of the portion possessed by itself, would find its natural correction in the scrupulosity with which other Churches would examine its pretensions. With what a rigid caution the work was conducted is shown by the familiar fact, that all the books, as we now have them, did not receive immediate recognition throughout the whole Church. Some were accepted in the Churches where they would naturally be best

known, and for a while rejected by others. The Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistles of James and Jude, the second and third of John, the second of Peter, and the Apocalypse, were all subjected to this process. Other books received partial recognition for a-while, but were subsequently rejected on further examination. Such were the Epistles of Barnabas and Clement, the Shepherd of Hermas, and the Apocalypse of St. Peter. The process was brought to its close about the end of the third century. The result was two-fold: first, that the books now composing the New Testament Canon were all of them the authentic productions of Divinely-inspired men; secondly, that no other writings of inspired men were extant, except these.

Thus the books were put together, and then a new confirmation of the accuracy of this conclusion was furnished. For it must have been patent to the men of that day, as it is patent to ourselves, that the books of the New Testament Canon, like the books of the Old, are united by an organic unity. They could be put together into a whole, like the parts of a puzzle map, and they mutually supplemented each other. They supply a connected history. The Gospels furnish it from the birth to the death of our Lord. The book of the "Acts of the Apostles" carries it on after His ascension, till the first imprisonment of St. Paul. The Epistles either furnish more copious details relative to this period, or extend the history to the period of the Apostles' martyrdom. The Apocalypse takes up the link in the

life-time of the oldest and longest-lived of the Apostles; and prophetically continues it, through all the chequered fortunes of the Church, to the time of our Lord's second advent.

If we look at the books in detail, the same unity presents itself. Every harmonized history of our Lord's life proves the existence of this unity in the four Gospels. A yet more striking evidence is furnished by the perfect portrait they present of the character of the Godman,—a portrait so wonderfully rich in all the elements of moral beauty and grandeur, that it has excited the unbounded admiration, and the almost worship, even of the infidel. Yet it is composed of individual features supplied by all the four Evangelists, and could not be perfectly gathered from any one, or even from the others, if any one had been absent. Then the book of the "Acts of the Apostles" (linked to the Gospels by the personal identity of St. Luke) explains the actual mode in which the Church was established; and in the illustrative instance of St. Paul, elucidates its early struggles and conquests with a graphic force and reality of description, which none other of the New Testament books possesses. Then, as the Acts have made us acquainted with the outward life of the early Church, so the Epistles make us acquainted with its inward life, —the spiritual meaning of all the facts previously recorded, and their bearing in the counsels of God upon the soul's conflicts and hopes. There is also an intimate relation between the Epistles and the Gospels, which

has not been sufficiently noted. They are united by a marvellous unity of doctrine: for as the Epistles do not contain a single doctrine of which germinal seeds and significant intimations are not to be found in the discourses of the great Teacher Himself, so also there is not one deep saying of our Master's which does not find its interpretation in the Epistles. The two circles of doctrine are absolutely conterminous. The Apocalypse enables us to recognise the position of our own age on the chart of the world's history, and to identify the character of the anti-Christian tendencies amid which we live, with a precision and confidence otherwise impossible. Lastly, if the New Testament be viewed in relation to the Old, it is found to give to the whole of the extant sacred writings, known as the Bible, an organic unity, and a doctrinal and historical completeness, which under the admitted circumstances of their composition are simply superhuman, and palpably Divine. The supernatural can never be taken out of Christianity, so long as the Bible exists.

Thus the early Church must have been confirmed in the conclusion it had reached, and have found it attested, as by the very signature of God. They possessed a double evidence, that the books of the New Testament Canon were the Word of God, as certainly as were the books of the Old Testament Canon, received from the forefathers of the ancient Church. In the first place, they had the proof that these particular books were really the productions of men inspired of God, and their

sole extant productions. Their ultimate authority was not derived from the men who wrote, but from the God who inspired them. And then they had this second evidence,—the witness borne by the internal contents of the collected volume to the superintending Providence of the Great Head of the Church. We can scarcely doubt that many other writings had proceeded from the pens of inspired men. But these alone survived, and were found to fit into each other like the chapters of a single book. What is the natural conclusion, but that, if other writings had perished, it was God's will that they should perish: if these survived, it was God's will that they should survive. He had of His own foredetermined will so guided the writers, and so preserved the writings, as to ensure that they should contain all things needed to "make men wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus."

If the question be asked, whether we in our own day can acquiesce in the conclusion of the ancient Church, that all the books of the New Testament are the production of inspired men, and that no other such productions were extant, the course of modern criticism supplies the ready answer. Efforts without number have been made to decry the historical credibility, and to overthrow the Divine authority of the New Testament books. But no successful effort has been made to separate any one book from the remainder of the Canon, as being devoid of the same authority as the rest of it, and no effort whatever has been made to add any

additional book to the Canon. The conclusion of the early Church, that these are inspired, and that no others are inspired, is thus confirmed. Men may deny that the sacred books of our religion are divine; but that they have a specific character of their own, possessed by no other extant books, appears to be indisputable.

The organic unity of the Old Testament Scriptures has long been the theme of admiring study, and the attacks of the higher criticism have only served to call attention to it. But the structural unity and evident design of the New Testament have not yet received the same attention; yet it bears on every page, at least as clearly as does the Old Testament, the manifest stamp of the Deity.

Thus, then, the early Church, impelled to find a standard of faith by the controversies which threatened the truth, and the corruptions which impaired the purity of the Church, were driven in the providence of God to collect together the writings of the Apostles and their immediate companions, and to form them into one book. They thus completed the canon of Scripture, but in so doing they established likewise the Rule of Faith; for they had found the express will and mind of that God, whose word endureth for ever,—at once the object of faith, the treasure-house of revealed wisdom, and the fountain of all hope and peace. God was yet among them, a living God speaking in the midst of His Church through Apostles who were dead, and in His presence man could but listen, believe, and adore.

I have stated the case in this form of a narrative, because it appears to me to present the acknowledged facts in so natural and consistent an order, as at once to remove many difficulties which have been raised on this question. For instance, the intricate arguments, by which some men seek to prove that the oral teaching of the Church is to be regarded as part of the Word of God equally with the inspired Scriptures, because it came first, and with individuals must generally come first in the order of time, appear to me to be dissipated by the plain light of the facts. That the oral teaching of the Apostles preceded their writings, may be most readily admitted, both in respect to their own personal preaching, and also in respect to the oral teaching of those who were themselves taught by the Apostles. There were Christians at Rome before Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans. Their Christianity must have been gained through oral teaching; but it was oral teaching received from, and dependent upon, the authority of the living Apostles. But after the death of the Apostles, the place of authority which had been filled by the oral teaching of living Apostles, was filled by the writings of the dead Apostles. The one succeeded into the place of the other, because the same Spirit of God wrought in both. In one case, that of St. Peter, the object of supplying in a permanent form what would otherwise pass away with the life of the speaker, was consciously present to the writer's mind. (2 Peter i. 13—15.) Whether it was so with other Apostles, we are

not positively told. That it was present to the mind of God, I feel it impossible to doubt, when I recall the careful provisions made by God, in ancient times, for the embodiment of the Law in a written form, and the strong denunciations of our blessed Lord of the oral traditions of the Jews, and of the sin of placing them side by side with the written Word. Thus, therefore, the case is clear. The rule of faith consisted at first in the oral teaching of the Apostles and their companions; and when this ceased at their death, the rule of faith was found in their writings. The two,—the teaching by word of mouth and by the written Epistle—(2 Thess. ii. 15), were of equal authority, because they were really one and the same revelation; the same in the truths they conveyed,—the same in the inspiration, by which the human instruments were guided.

But when it is argued, that, because the spoken conveyance of truth by the Apostles preceded the written conveyance of the truth by the Apostles, and because the oral teaching was as authoritative as the written, therefore the oral teaching of the Church in our own days is to be placed side by side with the Scriptures, as part of the Word of God, there is an evident confounding of things that differ. No doubt, in order of time the oral teaching generally comes first, because the child can hear before he can read; but the order of time is not the same as the order of authority. What the child is taught is really the Word of God, put into simpler words to suit a child's understanding. The

substance belongs to the Scriptures, and it is from the Scriptures alone that the teacher gathers it. What he contributes is nothing more than the easier language in which he puts truth, and the explanation by which he enables the child to understand it. The authority is in the Scriptures, and in them alone. The Church is the "keeper and witness of Holy Writ," but nothing higher. It is as unreasonable to place her teaching of the Word on the same footing as the Word itself, or to bring them for a moment into comparison, as it would be to say that the lawyer who publishes a collection of statutes gives authority to the statutes, or that the historical credibility of ancient records is due to the official into whose custody they have been placed. In any case there is no longer the same identity between the spoken teaching and the written Word, as existed in the time of the Apostles. Then the words were the same God-inspired words, whether they were spoken or written. But now the written Word is of God; while the spoken teaching, so far as it is distinct and separate from the written Word, is only of man. To confound the two arises from confusion of thought.

Another argument, often urged in favour of the oral tradition of the Church, has an apparently Scriptural foundation; but its fallacy lies so plainly on the surface as not to require any lengthened examination. In the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles occur the following words: "To whom also He shewed Himself alive after His passion, by many infallible proofs, being

seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." It is assumed (1), that these "things" were not amplifications of truths already taught in our Lord's previous ministry, but were new truths altogether; (2), that the words "kingdom of God," of very frequent use it will be remembered in our Lord's own personal teaching, refer to the external polity and organization of the Church, and not to its internal principles, as in the Great Teacher's previous parables; (3), that these "things" were not subsequently embodied in the Apostolic writings, but were communicated to the Church by verbal teaching alone. Three more violent and improbable suppositions, or suppositions more devoid of all reasonable proof, it would be difficult to find. In regard to the first, I have already remarked on the doctrinal identity existing between the teaching of our Lord and the teaching of the Apostles. There is no truth in either one which is not to be found in the other; neither is there any subject included in the range of the Church's oral teaching, which is not treated more or less amply both in the Gospels and the Epistles. Trace of new and esoteric teaching there is absolutely none. In regard to the second, it is a very violent style of criticism to give to the words "kingdom of God," in the Acts, a limited meaning, which it never has, either in the Gospels or in the Epistles. In regard to the third, if this intercourse of forty days between our Lord and his Apostles had occurred subsequently to the composition of the books of the New Testament

Scriptures, there might be some plausibility in it. But it took place before, not after. To suppose that the Apostles, taught by the Spirit of God and impregnated by the influence of their Master's teaching, should have had truths in their minds of which they have said nothing in their Epistles, is improbable to the last degree of improbability. St. Paul, in his address to the assembled elders at Miletus, declares, "I kept back nothing that was profitable to you;" and again, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God." It is natural to add that the Church of England, in none of her formularies, teaches a single doctrine which is not to be found in Holy Writ, and which is not exclusively based on its authority.

The rule of faith consists, therefore, of the written Word alone, and not of the written Word and of an oral teaching combined. The Scriptures stand alone, supreme over faith and practice, and nothing else divides their authority with them. In this sense the famous words of Chillingworth are to be understood: "The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants." The implicit and devout submission with which the early Fathers bowed to their authority, is seen from the extant writings of the ante-Nicene age. No language can be more absolute, more unqualified, more vivid, than what their authors employed to express their reverence for the Word of God. Hint of any other co-equal rule of faith there is none. The conditions of length to which this paper is necessarily confined, render

it impossible to support this assertion by quotations from their writings. But I have given the evidences elsewhere, and to them I must refer the reader.[a] The final authority on all questions of doctrine and practice was found by the early Church in the Canonical Scriptures, and they allowed no appeal from their decision.

The Church of England faithfully maintains the same opinion, and thus proves herself to be the true descendant of the pure Church of primitive times. Her sixth Article has been aptly called the sheet-anchor of a Protestant Churchman. "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary for salvation." In their strict form, no doubt, the words are negative; but in all fair construction, the positive side of affirmation is involved in the negative side of denial. "Every thing which is read therein, or can be proved thereby, is required of every man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, and be thought requisite or necessary for salvation." Considerable subtlety of argument has been exercised in denying this inference, and confining the words of the Article rigidly to their narrowest grammatical meaning. Nothing is to be laid down as an article of Faith which cannot be proved by Scripture: this is admitted; but it is added,

[a] "The Dogmatic Faith." The Bampton Lectures for 1867. Lect. II.

that it by no means follows that everything found in Scripture is to be regarded as an article of Faith.

The question branches out into two parts. On the one side it is said, that, if this were true, belief in the barest historical fact would be as essential to salvation as belief in the grandest truth, such as the Trinity of Persons in the Deity, or the Incarnation of the Son of God. If it be meant, by the objection, that the facts of Scripture are not to be as certainly believed as its doctrines, I should for myself protest against such a conclusion. If it be meant that a fact is not as important as a doctrine, and that belief in a genealogy, for instance, does not bear directly on the salvation of the soul, the question is not worth arguing, for no one would maintain it. The idea becomes ridiculous, directly you attempt to apply it. It may be as perfectly and absolutely true that the mile-stone, which marks the distance, is so many feet high and so many inches wide, as it is true that the road in which I am walking will certainly lead me to my journey's end; but it does not concern me to know the one fact, so nearly and vitally as it concerns me to know the other. The engine which draws the train may be distinguished by a name or a number; but what do I care about knowing it, compared to what I care about the assurance that it is able to convey me swiftly and safely to my home?

But this quibble is only advanced to conceal, amid the dust of disputation, a different and much more important question. No doctrine is to be received as

true which cannot be proved by Holy Scripture: are therefore all doctrines to be received as true, which can be proved by Holy Scripture? Some have replied in the negative; and base their answer on the assertion, that while the Word of God is contained in Scripture, Scripture is not the Word of God, in such a sense as that the two are co-extensive. What is taught in Scripture may be true, or may not be true, as the case may be. Can this be what the Church intended to teach? It is true that no doctrine is to be accepted as an article of Faith, which is not found in the Word. But is it also true that every doctrine found in the Word is to be received as an article of Faith? I answer, without hesitation, in the affirmative; as being as plainly the meaning of the Church of England, as it was plainly the belief of the Primitive Church.

I do not defend this assertion on any nice criticism of the exact language of the Article, or the precise force of its grammatical form. I rest it on wider grounds. All the Formularies of the Church must be construed as a whole; and if any particular sentence be in the least degree ambiguous, it must be explained by other portions of the same documents, and by the harmonious sense of the whole. Let it be supposed for a moment, that the language of the sixth Article is not to be understood on its affirmative as well as on its negative side; it then amounts to this,—that the mere fact of a doctrine being found in Scripture is no proof that it is true. Other considerations may prove it to be true, but

its place in the Word affords in itself no security for faith. Yet what says the Church, in her eighth Article, on the Creeds? "The three Creeds... ought thoroughly to be received and believed." Why? Wholly and solely because "they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture!" The meaning of the Church is therefore this: that whatever is read in Scripture, and may be proved thereby, is to be believed as an article of Faith.

But in truth this supreme power of the Scriptures, to invest whatever they teach with the sanction of their own authority, necessarily arises from their character as the Word of God. Whatever God speaks must have the authority of God, and be unerring as Himself. In the very Article which treats of the authority of the Church (Article XX.), the Scriptures are designated by the one strong and vivid phrase, "God's Word written." If any man doubts that, in the mind of the Church of England, "the Scriptures" and "God's Word written" are exact equivalents, let him study the Homilies. He need not go beyond the first of them,—"A fruitful exhortation to the reading and knowledge of Holy Scripture." It is a short Homily, yet twelve times is the phrase "Word of God" used to describe the Scriptures in this one Homily. It is impossible to reconcile such a conception of the Bible, as regards it as partly true and partly untrue, with such devout language as the following.

"If it shall require to teach any truth, or reprove false doctrine, or rebuke any vice, or commend any virtue, to

give good counsel, to comfort, to exhort, or to do any other thing requisite for our salvation; all those things," saith St. Chrysostom, "we may learn plentifully of the Scripture ... The Scripture of God is the heavenly meat of our souls; the hearing and keeping of it maketh us blessed, sanctifieth us, and maketh us holy; it turneth our souls; it is a light lantern to our feet; it is a sure, steadfast, and everlasting instrument of our salvation; it giveth wisdom to the humble and lowly hearts; it comforteth, maketh glad, cheereth, and cherisheth our conscience; it is a more excellent jewel, or treasure, than any gold or precious stone; it is more sweet than honey or honeycomb."

Such language is but the echo of the inspired words.

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever. The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb."

Thus we see that the absolute authority of the Scriptures as the Rule of Faith arises from their Divine Authorship. It is God's Book, and is therefore invested with God's authority; it is what the Church calls it in her Homilies,—"the infallible Word of God." This statement raises certain questions, on which it is very important to avoid misconception. They concern the existence of a human side in Scripture, and the nature of a plenary inspiration,—questions very closely related, but not identical. Great misapprehensions exist on both these questions. Even those whose habits of study

should lead them to discriminate between the various uses of words, fall into these mistakes, and speak and write as if the assertion of the Divine character of the Bible involved the denial of the human elements in its composition, and as if a plenary inspiration necessarily implied an inspiration that is mechanical.

The evidences of human authorship in the Bible are so many and patent, that it would be simple folly to deny them; and they furnish so marvellous a proof of the Divine character of the Book, that it would be suicidal for a Christian apologist to put them on one side, or to depreciate them. The men who at different periods, during a lapse of fifteen hundred years, wrote the several Books of Scripture, did not differ from each other more widely in their station and circumstances, than they differed in character, in intellectual capacity, in mental habitude, in constitutional temperament, in personal standpoint and tendency, and in their manner and style of expression. All these peculiarities survive in their Books. The language of each particular composition bears the impress of the times, and circumstances, and manner of thinking, and even state of knowledge, belonging to the era in which it was written. The national characteristics of the race to which the writers belong, in their love of imagery and illustration, the structure of their poetry, and the gorgeousness of their diction, are apparent every where. Nor could criticism fail to discriminate, at a glance, between the style of one author and the style of another. The Books could

no more be supposed to have proceeded all of them from one and the same author, than could a volume of modern essays, lying on the table before me while I write. None can recognise this more fully, or call attention to it more anxiously, than those who affirm the Book to be Divine; for it is from this very number and manifest variety of authors, that we gather the proof of the overruling intelligence and will of God. The actual writing of the Book was of man; but the whole design,—the selection of the writers, their fitness for their work, both intellectual and spiritual, and the overruling wisdom which has impressed on the entire volume a close connection and an organic unity, to which no parallel is to be found in the whole range of human literature—was of God.

Thus man has bestowed upon the Book that which is human, and God has bestowed upon the Book that which is Divine. The men brought to it their own separate modes of thought and of expression, each making his own contribution towards the completeness of the many-sided whole. God brought to the Book His perfect knowledge and unerring truth. Thus, while He left the writers free to exercise their own particular gifts, and stamp themselves on their compositions, He yet so ordered and controlled the work, that it was neither marred by ignorance, nor perverted by mistakes. The men brought to the work their style; God brought to the work His truth. Neither one trenched upon the other: the peculiarities of the human style not being

allowed on one side to corrupt truth, the Omniscience of God not interfering on the other side with the human characteristics. We should clearly remember, that it is no necessary part of man's work to write what is untrue. Liability to error is not the same thing as error; if it were, no human writing would be worthy of credit. When God therefore so acted upon the minds of the holy men of old as to preserve them from all mistake, He did not interfere with the human quality of the work,—nor take away from it anything which necessarily belongs to man. He simply added the action of His own infallibility. Thus the Bible is both human and Divine, according to the point of view from which we view it. It is none the less human, because it is Divine; nor any the less Divine, because it is human.

When, indeed, we take a step further, and endeavour to explain how the two elements acted together, and to mark out where the human ended and the Divine began, we find ourselves at a loss. The fact of the two acting together is one thing, and within the reach of our knowledge; the explanation of the mode is another thing, and beyond the reach of our knowledge. But our inability to explain the fact is no reason why we should doubt the fact. No Christian man questions that the Spirit of God acts upon the human will, conscience, and affections. The reality of converting and sanctifying grace is engrained into every fibre of our spiritual experience. But the Holy Ghost does not supersede our own efforts, or interrupt the exercise of

our own faculties. He only cooperates with and through them. Yet who can distinguish the point or the mode, when and how the Divine grace touches and blends with the human effort? If we believe that the Spirit acts upon the human heart, although we cannot explain the mode, we must equally believe that He can act on the human head, although we cannot explain the mode. There is no more difficulty in believing that God the Spirit can act on the human intellect without destroying its individuality, than there is in believing that He can act on the human heart without destroying its individuality. We know that He can do, and does the latter. Why should we stumble at the fact, that in the case of the sacred writers, He did the former?

But while we cannot exactly analyze what inspiration is, we can see with great confidence what it is not; because here we have the positive declarations of the Word itself to interpret the plain facts of the case. Inspiration was not mechanical, as if the human writers had been no more than the dead instruments, by which the skilful musician pipes or harps. They were conscious and intelligent instruments, and acted consciously and intelligently. All their faculties were quickened into their highest possible exercise. There was, indeed, in their words a depth and height and reach of meaning, which their own minds did not comprehend; the Spirit of God having an intention in their words, which was not recognized by themselves. The very text, which teaches us that the sacred writers did not fully under-

stand the meaning of the revelation of which the Holy Ghost made them to be the mouthpiece, implies by the very limitation that they understood it in part. This gap between the human thought and the Divine thought, may have differed in degree in different writers. In the case of Caiaphas, we are told (John xi. 51) that the Spirit of God intended to convey by His words a totally different meaning to what he himself intended to convey by them. In the case of the Old Testament Prophets, there appears to have been a difference of degree rather than of kind. "Of which salvation the Prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (1 Pet. i. 10, 11.) The inspiration under which the Scriptures were written was plenary, both in extent, inasmuch as it reached to the whole of the canonical books, and in degree, inasmuch as the writers were preserved from all error in communicating to others what they had themselves received from God; but it was no more mechanical than the action of the enlightened conscience and sanctified affections is mechanical. The individual man himself works not the less, but all the more, because it is "God who worketh in us, both to will and to do."

Thus we find, that the Church of primitive times and the Church of England are in entire accordance with

each other, as to their Rule of Faith. They recognise it in the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as being the embodied will and revelation of God. Here, then, we have our Rule of Faith; but what of its interpretation? The oral teaching of the Church constitutes no part of the rule. Rome indeed declares that "the Word of God is divided into Scripture and tradition" (Catechism of the Council of Trent. Preface). But the Protestant Churches reject such a doctrine, and recognise no Word of God, except the Word written. The Church of England acknowledges, with emphatic reiteration, its supremacy over the whole realm of Christian faith and practice. The three Creeds of the Church are only to be accepted because they may "be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture." (Art. VIII.) The Church "hath power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith;" but it is not lawful for her "to ordain anything that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place in Scripture that it is repugnant to another." (Art. XX.) Things ordained by General Councils, as necessary to salvation, "have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared that they are taken out of Holy Scripture." (Art. XXI.) "It is not necessary that traditions and ceremonies be in all places one and utterly like;" but they must all be subject to the condition, that "nothing be ordained against God's Word." (Art. XXXIV.) The Rule of Faith is unconditioned, perfect, absolute: the teaching of the Church

forms no part of it. But although it be true that the teaching of the Church has no authority in the first degree, may it not have authority in the second degree, as the divinely-appointed expounder and interpreter of Scripture?

The question suggests, that there exists an uniform tradition of Church teaching,—if not invariable, at least generally uniform, and distinctly recognizable as *the* teaching of the Church. It implies that the authorized interpreter exists. If this be not the fact, it is useless to argue the matter any further. It is waste of time to debate about the utility of a thing, which, as a matter of fact, is not. Uniform Church tradition, either of doctrine or of interpretation, there is none. When men speak of the authority of Catholic tradition, they only assert the right of an individual man to select, out of the conflicting opinions of ancient writers, what he likes; in short, to form his own belief, and then dignify it with the name of Catholic. Bishop Marsh, in his "Comparative View," has devoted a chapter to the discussion of this question,—"Whether the Divine and Apostolical Traditions, which are supposed to constitute the unwritten Word of God, have a real or only an imaginary existence;" and he sums up his conclusion in these memorable words:—

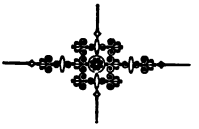
"There is no *foundation whatever* for the alleged existence of those Divine and Apostolical traditions which are made to constitute an *unwritten Word* or tradition, as a Rule of *Faith*. The Church of England, therefore, acted wisely in

rejecting that Rule; and when we further consider the *consequences* of that rejection—when we consider the load of superstition from which we were freed by the *means* of that rejection,—we may well assert, that the rejection of tradition, as a Rule of Faith, was *the vital principle of the Reformation.*" ("Comparative View," cap. iv., pp. 74, 75. Camb. 1814.)

We are therefore thrown back, of necessity, on the duty of private judgment, in our interpretation of the Word of God. But we do not therefore treat with disrespect, or with neglect, the writings of the Church Fathers, either of the primitive or of the Reformation period. They stand high among the divinely provided means, of which we should avail ourselves for the elucidation of the Word of God. It is true, that ancient writers differ from each other far too widely to admit of any authority whatever being ascribed to them, as any man may satisfy himself by glancing at such works as Pole's "Synopsis Criticorum," or Wolfius' "Curæ Philologicæ et Criticæ," or Blomfield's "Digest;" but as witnesses to the opinions of their times, and contributors to the work of interpretation, they are of very high value. Where interpretations of particular texts are incorporated into the formal documents of the Church, every consideration of reverence and duty requires us to pay to them the utmost deference and honour, compatible with liberty of conscience. The Church does not confer authority on Holy Scripture, either as regards its canonical completeness, or its internal interpretation; but she

is "the keeper and witness" of it, and is entitled to the gratitude and loving deference of all her children.

Our Rule of Faith is of God. It is Divine, therefore complete. It is fixed, once for all, in those divinely-inspired Scriptures which it pleased God should be written, and when written, should be preserved for the use of the Church at all time. It stands therefore untouched by the lapse of ages, and the mutations of human opinion. Its authority is supreme and absolute. It admits neither of addition nor of diminution. It is unchangeable as the will of Him, to whose being there is neither past nor future, but one eternal present. "O Lord, Thy Word endureth for ever in heaven." "All flesh is grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever."



Sin.

BY THE

REV. SIR EMILIUS BAYLEY, B.D., BART.

II.

SIN.

THERE are two great facts which everywhere meet us in this world, and cast their shadow over our existence,—suffering and death. Whatever else may be shifting and uncertain, these two great realities abide. We ask why it is so: how it happens that all men suffer, and that all men die. The reason, the only reason, is found in the fact that all have sinned. Universal suffering and universal death can only be accounted for by universal SIN.

But what do we mean by sin? Mr. Maurice writes that "Clergymen seem to take it for granted that their congregations understand what they mean when they speak of SIN. I am afraid," he adds, "that some of us do not quite understand ourselves what we mean by it." Perhaps not. And yet it is most important that we should know what it means. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is God's remedy for man's disease: that disease is sin. But we can attach little value to the remedy,

unless we know the deadly nature of the disease which it is intended to heal. In order to *overcome* an enemy, we must first of all *become acquainted* with him.

There are two sources from which we may derive a knowledge of sin: the Scriptures of truth, and our own personal observation and experience. There is a light *without*, which to the Christian at least is an unerring guide; there is a light also *within*, which, although somewhat dim and feeble, is yet in its measure true.

Apart from, and anterior to revelation, man has a certain sense of what he owes to God, and of what he owes to his neighbour. He has a real, and to a certain extent a just perception of what he ought, and what he ought not to be or to do. In other words, he is aware of the distinction between right and wrong; and thus it has happened that such terms as duty and sin, lawful and unlawful, moral good and moral evil, worth on the one hand and wickedness on the other, have been familiar as household words amongst the people of all countries, from the beginning of the world. In therefore dealing with the question of sin, it is not necessary to rely exclusively upon Scripture for our arguments or our proofs. The testimony of Scripture is invaluable, and without it we shall never arrive at an adequate sense of the nature and evil of sin. But we are not absolutely dependent upon it. We have a witness nearer home, and more entirely within our reach; a witness whose testimony we cannot gainsay or call in question, even the witness of the individual conscience.

Nor is it only in their separate and independent character that these two witnesses are important: it is in their combined and united testimony that their chief value consists. If there be in me a profound sense both of duty and of fault, a conviction both of what I ought to be, and of what I am not, and I find that the teaching of the Word of God exactly coincides with these my convictions,—that there is an exact agreement between what the Bible declares that I am, and what by observation I know myself to be,—there is fresh light thrown upon my condition before God, and cumulative proof supplied of the heinousness of my sin and of the greatness of my guilt in God's sight. I might dispute the testimony of the one witness or of the other, did they stand alone; but their conjunct evidence carries with it a force which it were unreasonable to resist, and the only result I can arrive at is that of the publican who said, "God be merciful to me a *sinner*."

"A SINNER!" What, then, is a sinner? What is sin? Let us seek an answer to this question, first from the Word of God, and then from experience; let us appeal first to Scripture, and then to conscience.

The classical definition of sin is that given by St. John in his first Epistle (1 John iii. 4): "Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." Or, more literally, "Every one that committeth sin, committeth also lawlessness: for sin is lawlessness." The Greek word rendered "lawlessness" is the Septuagint translation of the

Hebrew "Pehsha" in Ps. xxxii. 1, "Blessed is the man whose *transgression* (Pehsha) is forgiven;" and the idea conveyed in the Hebrew word, is that of falling or breaking away from any one. Sin is thus a breaking loose from God, a violation of His law, a rebellious rejection of His authority, a setting up of the independent will of man against the supreme will of God.

The sin of Adam at once illustrates and proves this. The characteristic of Adam's state in his primæval blessedness was *holy dependence.* All creatures are and must be completely and absolutely dependent upon the great Creator. When Adam, therefore, was placed in Eden with an unlimited grant of the fruit of the trees of the garden, one tree was reserved as a visible sign of his dependence. For whose did that reservation prove the garden to be? Not Adam's own, or he would have been under no restriction from a higher authority. The prohibited tree was a daily remembrance of the covenant of reservation, so to speak, which formed a part of his lease; a standing memorial to him that he was the tenant, and not the owner of the garden.

This explains the nature and the depth of Adam's transgression. God, as the great Proprietor, reserved a single token of His sovereignty. Of the trees of the garden Adam might freely eat; but he was a creature, and the garden contained one visible symbol of his creaturely dependence. His transgression therefore was an usurpation of independence, an act of lawlessness, a declaration of rebellion against God's sovereign

authority. It was as though he said, "I will be no longer dependent, I will acknowledge no restrictions; I will not consent to be a tenant, I will treat the garden as my own; I will be a god unto myself: I will be independent."

Thus we have the true answer to the infidel, who rejects the Divine history on the ground of the supposed absurdity of so tremendous a punishment having been inflicted upon Adam and his posterity for so small an offence. Eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was not, strictly speaking, Adam's offence. His offence consisted in lawless rebellion against that state of dependence in which God had placed him. The reserved fruit was the symbol of that dependence. The smaller the restriction, the more inexcusable the rebellion; and the sin, therefore, instead of being lessened, was only aggravated by the insignificance of the fruit. With an unlimited grant of all the trees of the garden, Adam was not content to submit to the Divine Sovereignty. The reservation, though so small, was irksome to him. He will cast off the symbol of dependence; he will acknowledge no will but his own. Adam's sin therefore was the assertion of *self-will*, as opposed to the will of God. It was an act of direct *disobedience* to a Divine command. It was a *transgression of law*, an act of lawlessness which, if allowed to prevail, would have subverted the Divine authority, and overthrown God's rule in God's own earth.

The essence of all sin, therefore, is rebellion against

God. David felt this when he cried out, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned." (Ps. li. 4.) Why does he say, "Against Thee only"? He had sinned grievously both against Uriah and Bathsheba, and yet he says, "Against Thee only have I sinned." It is evident that the thought of his sin being against God, swallows up all other considerations. But this is the root of all sin. It was not more a part of David's great offence, than it is of the least that we can commit.

Whatever may make the difference in guilt between one sin and another, they are all alike in this,—that they are against God, for they are all trangressions of His holy law.

Sin, then, is the lawless defiance of the Sovereign authority of God,—the setting up of the will of the creature against the will of the Creator. It may be true that such rebellion can harm only the rebel himself. The potsherd of the earth seeks in vain to strive with his Maker; nevertheless, his sin has in it all the malignity of treason. The revolt of man's will, if it were successful, would end in the dethronement of God. If every sinner had his way, there would be on earth but a wild and lawless anarchy of contending passions, or else a stern and sullen despotism of evil.

Is it not plain, then, that wilful opposition to God is the deadliest crime possible in a system, the well-being of which depends upon the perfect submission of all things to His will; and that the sinner, rebel as he is against almighty power and eternal law, must, for the

sake of the peace and safety of creation, be either won to repentance and submission, or consigned to a doom which is his just recompense?

But it may be asked, What is this "law," the transgression of which constitutes sin? What is this stern, unbending rule, any deviation from which involves man in so tremendous a penalty? I answer, Not any particular set of precepts and prohibitions, though all precepts and prohibitions given by God must be to him who receives them a part of "the law;" but "the law" itself is far higher than these. It is the manifestation by the supreme Lord to His reasonable creatures, of so much of the perfection of His character and of the expression of His will as can be comprehended by the creature, in order that the character and will of the Lord may be formed and maintained, according to his limited capacity, in the creature also. It is with this purpose that the Lord reveals Himself; so that the revelation is to the receiver of it most properly a "law," and its purpose makes it a law of love, since it is only by conforming to this that the created being can be truly happy. For this connection of the creature's happiness with the existence of a real harmony between his own spiritual being and the will of God, is not an arbitrary enactment, but a necessary consequence of the inalienable relation between the perfect Creator in whom we have our being, and the reasonable creatures of His hand.

And this, first, because only by this harmony of his

own will with the will of his Creator, can the perfection of the creature's own nature be reached or maintained. And then, next, because only in the Creator can the creature, created with capacities for knowing, loving, serving his Creator, ever find complete happiness. All lower objects, whatever measure of passing pleasure they may afford him, leave the deeper part of his nature unsatisfied, and without full satisfaction there can be no perfect and enduring bliss. Unless, therefore, his character be in harmony with the character of his Maker, there can be no true happiness for the creature. By whatever means, then, the supreme Lord reveals Himself to His reasonable creatures,—whether it be by His voice in nature, or in His written Word, or in the secret whisper of the conscience,—however it may be given, the revelation of His character, His will, His blessed purposes, is "the law" to His reasonable creation. Only in fulfilling this can any creature act according to the perfectness of his own created being, or be happy in the knowledge and love of his Lord. This, then, is "the law," and here we may see what is its "transgression."

It is for the creature in thought and in will, and most of all in such actions as combine thought and will, to choose for himself anything which is contrary to the supreme will of his Lord. Sin is not *a thing*, an event existing external to and independent of man, but a certain evil mode of action by a reasonable creature, springing from within, and affecting his own innermost constitution; at once creating a fatal disturbance in the

intricate mechanism of his nature, and increasing the contradiction which already exists between himself and the Almighty.

Thus far, then, our argument, as based upon the definition of Scripture, has led us to a twofold conclusion: viz., first, that sin is an inward act of the will, springing from and bound up with the innermost nature of the sinner; and secondly, that it is a direct attack upon the supreme sovereignty of God, an act of lawless rebellion against His authority, and that if unchecked and uncontrolled it stops at nothing short of the dethronement of God. Well may the Most High call it "the abominable thing which He hates." (Jer. xliv. 4.)

But these positions are by no means universally accepted. There are many who acknowledge that man is not as he should be, that there is something wrong and out of place in his moral as in his physical mechanism, who yet dispute the accuracy of the Christian doctrine concerning sin, and deny that it is so hideous and monstrous a thing as the Christian teacher affirms it to be.

There are those who profess to be believers in the perfectibility of human nature, to have confidence in the substantial integrity of that nature, to believe that if rightly schooled and influenced, and delivered from the incubus of bad laws and bad examples, it is inherently capable of remedying any defects that may attach to it, and of gradually attaining to a very high degree of excellence and perfection.

Another class of objectors take their stand on different ground. They cannot shut their eyes to plain and patent facts. They cannot but admit that sin exists, and that it is a disease of great malignity; but they question its innate character. They do not deny that it assails, and often inflicts great injury upon the fortress, but they deny its occupation of that fortress. It is in their opinion something external to the will, something which has its sources without, and not within, and needs therefore a healing which is also external in its character.

I confess that I find it difficult to understand how this view can be reconciled either with Scripture or experience. But to show that I have not misrepresented it, I quote some sentences from Mr. Orby Shipley's sermons on "Sin." He begins his first sermon on "The Nature of Sin," by asking, "What is Sin?" and then gives the following answer:—

"The form in which this question is made, and the manner in which it is purposed to answer it, is suggestive of the fact that sin has some actual existence, that sin is some absolute and positive thing. It points to the truth that sin is something without ourselves, something independent of ourselves; for if sin be not external to and apart from ourselves,—if it be nothing more than a sentiment or feeling within ourselves,—it would be more difficult than it is to find an answer at once true and satisfactory, or even intelligible."

And then, a little later, he thus explains himself:—

"The subject for our consideration this morning is the

nature of sin. . . . The nature of sin to which I desire to lead your thoughts, is its personality. The Gospel for to-day teaches us this important lesson, that the Evil One is a person: 'Then was Jesus led up into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.' . . . I think we may assume that the author of sin is a person. . . . Sin, then, in relation to ourselves, is both the presence of a person within the soul, and the influence of a person upon the soul of man."

And again:

"Sin is the personal influence of a personal agent."

Surely these statements are, to say the least, both confused and defective. As far as I comprehend them, they appear to make sin identical with temptation. At all events they make it consist of the "influence" of the Tempter, and affirm positively that it is not anything internal, but "something without ourselves, . . . external to and apart from ourselves."

Now, in arguing with these two classes of objectors, it may be useful to note what they have in common. Amidst much that is widely different, they both agree in this,—that they reduce to a minimum the evil and the guilt of sin. Sin, argues the one objector, is not the evil and deadly thing which you assert it to be. Sin is not within me, pleads the other: it exists, and great is its evil; but it occupies a region external to myself, and although I am liable to be affected by its malarious influences, it has obtained no lodgment within the centre of my being. Thus in either case a great mistake is committed as to the nature of the disease. It matters

little whether we deny its virulence, or shift its locality; whether we affirm that it is not deadly, or deny that it has taken possession of our inmost being. In either case we have little to apprehend. In the one a special remedy is hardly needed; in the other some applications of an external kind are all that will be required.

The believer therefore in the comparative sinlessness of sin, and the perfectibility of our nature, dispenses with the atonement. The advocate of the external character of sin knows no remedy for it but the sacramental system, as it is called, of the Romish Church. In either case the seat of the disease is untouched, and the deadly virus which pervades our nature is left unchecked and unsubdued.

Now the evidence already brought forward from the Word of God, is, I think, directly opposed to the views of sin above referred to. No candid student of Scripture can dispute its testimony both to the deadly evil and innate character of sin. Sin, as we have seen, is lawless rebellion against God, the direct negation of His rule and His authority. But this rebellion has its seat in the will. It is something more than an influence acting from without: it is an action, yea, often an intense course of action from within. Its seat is the inner man, and whenever it gains the mastery, it rules with supreme and undisturbed authority.

But I said at the beginning of this paper that there were two witnesses to the moral state of man, two sources from whence we derive our knowledge of the

character and guilt of sin: Scripture and conscience. Let us continue our inquiry by the light which these two witnesses conjointly throw upon it. Let us test our doctrine not only by the Bible, which cometh from God, but also by the conscience of man responding thereunto.

We will begin our examination with the latter of these two witnesses, and ask, What is the moral state of man, as found by observation? I need scarcely repeat that in virtue of his moral nature, and of the faculties which belong to it, man has a certain sense of right and wrong, and that he can tell both of his own conduct and of that of his fellows, whether it be in agreement with the one, or chargeable with the other. He knows to a certain extent the rule of righteousness. He possesses a measuring-line, by the application of which he can form a judgment upon human behaviour, and come to a just conclusion as to how far it is in any particular instance deserving of praise or blame.

Now in looking abroad for evidence over the wide expanse of society, it is not necessary to take into account the openly gross and palpable transgressions of the Divine law. We stand in no need to make our appeal to the murders and the thefts and the other deeds of violence which are punishable by the State, or to the wars and ruthless desolations by which the lives and happiness of millions have been sacrificed to the lust of power. We find abundant proof of the breach of the second table of the law within the limited circle of our own neighbourhood, yea, within the yet more restricted boundary

of our own homes, and of our own hearts. We have but to call to mind the fraud and deceit which so often mark the dealings of man with man; the slanders and jealousies and paltry struggles of vanity, the out-breaks of temper, the angry words, the acts of meanness and of selfishness which enter so largely into the life of modern society; nay, we have but to look within, and fix the eye upon those recesses of the inner man which are known only to the man himself; and we can come only to the conclusion that evil everywhere abounds, that all have sinned, and come short of the high standard of absolute virtue. And if thus far proof is yet wanting of the entire depravity of our race, there is surely abundant evidence to negative a total and universal rectitude.

But the Bible goes beyond this; and it will be found, I think, that experience confirms its teaching. The Bible tells us that man is conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity, that the heart is deceitful above all things and incurably wicked, that human righteousness is as filthy rags; that all, without one single exception, have sinned, and that the whole world lieth in wickedness.

But these strong statements are thought by many to contradict the findings of experience. It is argued, and it cannot I think be denied, that apart from Christianity and the influences of religion upon the heart, there exist, in some persons at least, a strong sense of honour and integrity, an utter detestation of falsehood, cruelty, and wrong, a sincere delight in soothing the sorrows and relieving the wants of others; that, in a word, there will

be found in many, a high-toned morality, a large-hearted benevolence, a genuine sympathy, which seem to run counter to the sweeping assertions of Scripture, and to create an antagonism between the results of observation and the doctrine of the Word of God.

The solution of this apparent difficulty is to be found in the fact that there are two distinct moral standards applicable to the conduct and character of man. There is a social, and there is a divine standard of morality. There is a duty which man owes to his neighbour, which is to a great extent observed and acted upon in society; and, distinct from this, there is a duty which man owes to his God. It is a possible, nay, an actual and common thing, for a man to be decently and even scrupulously observant of the one, and yet wholly unobservant and forgetful of the other. And there are not a few,—who, on the strength of those virtues which belong to an earthly morality are good citizens and good members of society,—who yet, in utter destitution of the virtues of a heavenly morality, have no sense whatever of the authority of God, and are practically living without Him in the world.

The great question agitated in the Bible is not a question simply between man and man, accusing or excusing one another: it is a question between man and God. It is God's controversy with His own sinful world which is there discussed; and we must not complicate, far less identify, two questions which are so distinct the one from the other. The man who deals

justly with his neighbour is better than the man who steals from him; but if both be alike heedless and forgetful of God, God may and does bring the same accusation against both of them, even that He has nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against Him. The prime charge then which is levelled against our race, is the charge of ungodliness; and it is a charge which is amply verified by observation. You have but to cast a glance over the general aspect of society, and, apart from the comparatively few who are living under the influences of vital Christianity, you cannot fail to observe that each is obviously treading in a way of his own; and, without any practical reference to the will of his rightful Sovereign, is walking after the counsel of his own heart, and after the sight of his own eyes. It may be a way of industry, of honesty, of high-toned morality, or even of benevolence; but unless respect be had in it to the will of the most High, it is not a way of godliness. Or if you decline to pass under review the conduct of the many, we bid each one take cognizance of himself. Let each look honestly at his own heart, or back on his own history, and both conscience and memory can tell how little the sense of God has had to do with either. You may have done many things which God commands; you may have abstained from doing many things which God forbids; but if your actions have been wrought without any reference to the will of God, then have you been practically living without God,

and the heavy charge of ungodliness is established against you.

Such then is the moral state of man as found by observation: such is the practical Atheism of the human heart as testified to by conscience and experience. But what saith the Scripture? What are the testimonies given in the Bible to the sinfulness of man?

Christianity is in its very essence the religion of *sinners*. The inborn and absolute corruption of all men is the basis on which the remedial system of the Gospel is proposed for the acceptance of the world. The rudimental lesson of Christianity is to convince of sin; and it accomplishes this by bringing home to the conscience the requirements of the law of God. "The law enters," and what is the state of heart which that entrance reveals? Let us deal with ourselves upon the footing of the second table of the law; let us apply as a test the second great and comprehensive commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." We admit to the full the existence of certain social virtues, we allow that apart from the influences of Christianity a man may be just, honest, truthful, benevolent, and kind; but how far short does all this fall of the standard of God's second law,—how light a thing is it when weighed in the balance of the sanctuary! Do we ever see any approach to a love of our neighbour as intense and unwearied as the love of oneself? or, apart from the instincts of relationship, can we point out an individual as careful of the interest and

happiness of another as he is of his own? From the application of this severe and lofty rule it cannot but be evident that the best of men, in his natural condition, falls far short of the summit of perfection, and that selfishness, an inborn preference for self, is the element in which he has his being.

But after all, the best method of estimating the measure of man's sin, is to set up the standard of man's incumbent godliness: to rise from the social to the sacred; and instead of asking the question how much we owe to our neighhbour? to enter upon the inquiry how much we owe to God?

It is an observation of Bishop Butler, that it is the great peculiarity of the Bible to treat the world in the special light of its being God's world, and to deal with men under the special view of their being the subjects of God: that it everywhere proclaims the moral government of God, and asserts His rightful and supreme authority over man.

Now it is in connection with this principle that the Bible charges man with being destitute of godliness, and asserts that, if allowed to pursue his own course and to follow the promptings of his own heart, he is altogether content to live without God in the world. Nor is it possible to refute this accusation. Take any man of average everyday character, such an one as we meet daily in the ordinary walks of life,—a man marked by no violent outbreaks of irreligion, by no distinct departures from the customs and usages of society,—and

ask him to pass in review the motives, the desires, and the purposes which influence him, and then to tell you how much or how little has the will of God had to do with them. If the investigation be honestly conducted, it will surely lead to the conclusion that God has not been in all, yea probably not in any, of his thoughts; that each day, week, month, year,—aye that the entire lifetime has been passed in practical forgetfulness of His existence, and very much as if there were no God in the world. It is no excuse for such a man to argue that he does not steal, that he does not lie, that he does not neglect the calls of charity,—enough the simple reply, that he does not love God: that he is content to ignore the existence of his rightful Lord, and to exile from his regards the God who made him.

Nay, the Bible not only charges man with being indifferent to God, it accuses him of being hostile and opposed to Him. A worldly mind is "enmity against God." A charge this of the heaviest kind, and one which, if sustained, proves to demonstration the depravity of the human heart. But can it be sustained? There are many who confess that they are without God, who will indignantly deny that they are in any sense against Him: they will acknowledge that they do not love Him as they should, but they will not allow that they cherish any enmity against Him.

No wonder indeed if men are not sensible of ever hating God, when they never think of Him. We are conscious of no enmity against our deadliest foe, so

long as he is altogether absent from our thoughts. And were God quite willing that He, and His creature man, should live on upon these terms,—that they should be mutually quit of each other; that man should take no cognizance of his Maker, and that God should leave him in the full possession of this world's enjoyments, give him, as it were, a fee-simple of His own glorious creation, and leave him everlastingly alone,—no wonder, I say, if on these conditions he were willing to be at peace with such a God, and his heart were to entertain no hatred, no hostility against Him.

But this is not the condition of existence in which we find ourselves. God will not give His consent to it. God asserts, and will assert unceasingly, His rightful authority, and demands submission to His supreme will. How is it then when the will of God thwarts and crosses the will of man, when He stands in the path before us and forbids our further progress; still more when He threatens us with the recompense of our misdoings, and actually inflicts upon us the punishment which we richly deserve? We find then that the true God is not the God of our own deceitful imaginations, not the God of poetry or romance, but the God of holiness, of justice, and of truth, that "will by no means clear the guilty." Then it is that the real character of the inner man displays itself, that the sediment of corruption is stirred at the bottom of the heart, and that the death-struggle begins between the natural man and the authority of God. If men are

only let alone, they will pass quietly through life as the mere forgetters of God: it is when they are not let alone, but are crossed and provoked by a higher will than their own, that they stand forth in their true light as the enemies of God.

An impressive confirmation of the above views is supplied by the fact, that death,—the awful mystery of death,—universally prevails. That death is the penalty of sin is proved alike by the teaching of Scripture and the verdict of conscience. "The wages of sin is death." And St. Paul expressly connects the universality of death with the universality of sin: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Rom. v. 12.)

Our view of the nature and evil of sin indeed is scarcely complete unless we trace it to its origin, so far at least as man is concerned. By the light of nature, and by the simple exercise of the faculties of observation and reflection, we come to the conclusion that sin universally prevails: wherever we find a member of the great human family, whether he be possessed of the light of revelation, or only of that of nature, there we find a sinner. "All have sinned." And if we pursue our inquiry upwards, we find that his father, and his father's father, and indeed every individual in the long line of his ancestry, up to the first parent of our race, has been a sinner before him.

Now, whence this prevalence of sin, whence this

universal proneness to commit iniquity? The Bible tells us, and philosophy can give us no better explanation of the fact, that all men sin because of Adam's transgression: "By one man sin entered into the world." That not only the mortality of all, but the sinfulness of all, is the universal consequent of Adam having sinned: as though by his act of disobedience there was the striking out of a fountain, whence the moral poison has flowed forth in a descending stream upon all the men of all future generations. It is important to observe the effect of his first sin upon Adam himself. As a wilful transgressor against the will and commandment of the Lawgiver, he felt immediately that the relationship between them had undergone a change, and trust, confidence, and love were at once replaced by shame and fear and guile. "Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord amongst the trees of the garden." Nor does this experience of our first parent fail to reproduce itself in each one of his descendants who is guilty of like transgression. It is felt at once that sin, when committed, separates the soul from God, and that the breach remains unhealed as long as the sin remains unconfessed and unforgiven. A fatal change, then, took place in Adam when he fell; but the consequences of that fall did not end with Adam,—they were transmitted to his children. We read of Adam, that he was created after the image of God; but of Seth, that he was born after the image of Adam: not of Adam in his original, but of Adam in

his transformed likeness. (Gen. v. 3.) And the effect, the universal effect of this transmitted corruption, is strongly attested in the brief record that we have of this world's history between the fall and the flood, when "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. vi. 5.)

That the tendency to sin was inborn may not be expressly affirmed in the Scriptural narrative of antediluvian times, but it may be clearly inferred: and the inference is strengthened by the fact, that when the population of the old world was swept away, and "eight souls" only "were saved by water," this channel, narrow as it was, proved enough for the transmission of the poison, in all its strength, from the generations that went before to the generations that came after,—a sufficient avenue of communication, by which the fatal infection was carried across the flood, and all its waters were unable to wash it away.

But the transmission of this sore disease is not a mere inference: it is a thing of positive affirmation. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners." "In Adam all die." And this direct teaching of Scripture has a thousand analogies to confirm and illustrate it. That the offspring of Adam, had he remained innocent, would have been untainted as himself, has no more of marvel or of mystery in it than

the gentleness of the dove, or the faithfulness of the dog, or the perfume of the rose, transmitting from generation to generation the unchanging characteristics of the species to which they belong. Or, on the other hand, that all men should inherit the corrupt and earthly bias of their ancestor, transformed and deteriorated by the transgression into which he fell, is no more ground for astonishment than the inherited ferocity of the tiger, or the transmitted poison of the foxglove. Analogy alone may not *prove* our doctrine, but it shows that it is not unreasonable: and when, agreeing with Scripture and borne out by experience, it gives its testimony in favour of an inborn and inherited corruption, it were contrary to the dictates of common sense to ignore its teaching and reject its proof.

To sum up, then, our brief exposition of the mystery of *sin*, an attempt has been made to explain its nature by the two-fold light of Scripture and experience, and at the mouth of these two witnesses to establish its true character as lawless and wilful rebellion against the authority and will of God. This positive doctrine concerning sin has been asserted on the one hand against those who, believing in the integrity of man's nature, and ignoring the consequences of the fall, deny the sinfulness of sin, and the depravity of the human heart; and on the other, against those who question its innate character, and treat it as a thing altogether external to the life and nature of man. It has been shown that on the testimony both of Scripture and of experience, sin is a real, a

gigantic evil, involving a continual breach of the second table of the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" as also of the first great commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." The Bible charges man with being indifferent to God, aye, and when crossed and dealt with upon the footing of justice, as being actually hostile to God: the depraved heart is content to live without God as long as God leaves the sinner alone, and suffers him to walk in a way of his own devising; but the same heart is filled with enmity and opposition, when God thwarts the will, asserts His righteous claims, and inflicts the penalty of disobedience. Nor is sin only a positive and fearful evil, it is an evil which has its seat within the soul: it is an internal not an external disease. Nor is there any point perhaps in which experience coincides more completely with Scripture than in this. Whatever may be said of temptation and of the influences of the Evil One, the sin when committed is our own; we feel it to be so: the guilt is our's also; we cannot be compelled to sin against the consent of the will: it is when we choose the evil that sin is brought forth; and "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." To treat it, therefore, as a mere outward influence is to contradict Scripture, and ignore the voice of conscience.

Lastly, we have traced up sin to its source, in the first great assertion of independence and act of lawless rebellion on the part of the progenitors of our race; whereby,

in harmony with a thousand analogies in the animal and physical world, there has descended from parent to child, and from generation to generation, the poison of an inherited corruption, the deadly moral disease of inborn sin: "the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam; whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and is of his own nature inclined to evil." (Article ix.)

If the above argument be substantially a sound one, it is evident that the remedy, to be effectual, must be commensurate with the disease.

In a critical period of English history a great Statesman devised a policy, to which was given the expressive name of THOROUGH. The point in dispute lay between the prerogatives of the Crown and the liberties of the subject; and the chief adviser of Charles sought to establish the one and to destroy the other, by a policy, firm, decided, and uncompromising. The policy of "thorough," as devised and carried out by the Earl of Strafford, may, in earthly politics, be wise or unwise, judicious or injudicious, according to circumstances. But in the domain of religion, in all that relates to the salvation of the soul, it is the policy, the only policy, that can avail. Thorough is the ruin wrought by the fall; thorough the redemption introduced by Christ; complete and perfect His atonement: ample and all-sufficing His salvation. Nor can the disease of sin be healed, save by the reception through faith of the

finished work of Christ, and the realization within the soul of the regenerating and renewing power of the Holy Spirit. Undervalue the disease and you undervalue the remedy: it is only when sin is truly known and keenly felt, that man recognises to the full his need of a Saviour and begins to appreciate the salvation of Christ.

But the subject now under discussion is not the remedy, but the disease. Ponder well its nature and its guilt. The charge against man which we have sought to establish, is that of inborn ungodliness: let that be proved, and the verdict must be against us. Surely the evidence is ample and conclusive. In the stately and expressive language of one of the greatest of our old English divines:—

"Enough appears of the admirable frame and structure of the soul of man to show the Divine presence did sometime reside in it; more than enough of vicious deformity to proclaim He is now retired and gone. The lamps are extinct, the altar overturned; the light and love are now vanished, which did the one shine with so heavenly brightness, the other burn with so pious fervour; the golden candlestick is displaced and thrown away as a useless thing, to make room for the throne of the prince of darkness; the comely order of this house is turned all into confusion; 'the beauties of holiness' into noisome impurities; 'the house of prayer to a den of thieves.'"

That God hath withdrawn Himself, and left His temple desolate, we have many sad and plain proofs

before us. The stately ruins are visible to every eye, bearing in their front this doleful inscription :—

"Here God once dwelt."

The faded glory, the darkness, the disorder, the impurity, the decayed condition of this once noble temple, too plainly show the Great Inhabitant is gone.

Atonement.

BY THE

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III.

ATONEMENT.

THE doctrine of the Atonement has passed through a great variety of exposition, from the days of St. Paul and the Galatian Judaizers to the times of Anselm and Abelard, and in these latter days has found its advocates holding two very widely different theories. There are those who hold the doctrine as it was revived at the time of the Reformation, and those who adopt the philosophic interpretation of the Rationalistic school.

The two systems may be stated thus. The Reformers taught that the reconciliation of a sinner to a holy God whom he had offended was made possible, righteous, and consistent with the supremacy of the moral government of the world, by the atonement and sacrifice rendered through the obedience of Jesus Christ unto death. The Rationalist, on the other hand, asserts that God needs no Atonement; for that He is eternal Love, without variableness or change, and therefore cannot be reconciled.—But men who do not know or believe in

the love of God must be delivered from the bondage of sin and fear, and brought to the arms of a loving Father.—It was necessary that some pledge of the Father's love should be given, and this was manifested in Jesus Christ.—He came into the world not to avert wrath, but to drive out fear.—His life of love, His affecting self-sacrifice, awakens trust and confidence in men's hearts, and leads them back to the Father.—The reconciliation is thus accomplished in man, not in God, who is pure, unchangeable Love, too high, too sublime to require a sacrifice or Atonement.

Between these two views of Atonement there is no middle ground, and we must either take our stand upon the plain, logical, and evangelical utterances of Scripture, or accept the philosophical theory of the Rationalist; for it has been shown again and again in the course of the controversy, that the latter system must either exclude some portions of Scripture as uninspired, or break the harmony of the canon, in order to establish its claim to acceptance. For example: it has been argued by Professor Jowett, that because Jesus never uses the word sacrifice, as applied to His own life or death, therefore the inferences and expositions of the writers of the Epistles in the use of such expressions are to be regarded as unauthorised. We are quite content to leave the learned Professor to the benefit of a verbal or technical distinction; but we claim from him the admission that although the word sacrifice is not used by our Lord, yet nothing less than sacrifice is expressed

in the following passage (Matt. xxvi. 28): "This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." How would such words sound in the ears of a Jew? A new covenant, shedding of blood for the remission of sins, and yet no sacrifice! Let this specimen suffice for the present. All we want to urge is the necessity of having some standard by which the doctrine of Atonement may be tested.

Now, there are two previous questions which must be settled philosophically before you can deal with the Atonement philosophically,—these are the entrance of sin into the world and the incarnation of Christ. We admit these to be mysteries deep and unfathomable as the eternal counsels of an infinite God. All we know of them is from Revelation, and we are shut up to the actual statements of Scripture, neither more nor less. In like manner, the Atonement is a mystery, veiled in the person of the God-man, and made known to us in the Old and New Testaments, under every form of illustration in history, type, and prophecy; and in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ recorded in the writings of His disciples. The object, then, of this paper will be to show the necessity and nature of the Atonement, as presented to us in Scripture.

I. The Atonement was a necessity. "Ought not Christ to suffer, and to enter into His glory?" are the

words of Christ Himself. The relation in which man stands to God as the moral Governor of the world renders an Atonement necessary.

It will be said, Why cannot God forgive the sinner without Atonement? Have we never read in Luke vii., that when the two debtors had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both? Here was no satisfaction rendered to justice: it was a pure act of benevolence. And why cannot God as frankly forgive, even as the father the prodigal son? Let us put the case of a child coming to a parent, and confessing that he had committed some fault which had brought disgrace upon him: what would be the father's reply? Would he not be ready, with the overflowings of his love, to grant a frank and a full forgiveness? but he would be restrained by the conviction that if he passed over the offence without showing his intense horror of it, he would not be treating his child with love, but on the contrary, with unkindness; for it would leave the child under the impression that his sin was of little moment. And where are the Christian parents who do not feel that in forgiving their children when they do wrong, they must of necessity impress upon their minds the sense of the wrong they have done, or kindness will be their ruin? In like manner, we must not ascribe to a holy God a rule of forgiveness which would imply that He was indifferent to sin. Let a man once think that God winks at sin, and he will become indifferent to it himself. (1 Sam. iii. 13.) It would inevitably lead to

the Antinomian doctrine: "Let us continue in sin, that grace may abound."

What, then, do we understand by a free forgiveness? In the language of Scripture we answer, It is that which costs the receiver nothing. It is a gift,—without money and without price, and so absolutely and unconditionally free. But because it costs the receiver nothing, it does not follow that it has not cost the Giver much. If a creditor has sunk a large sum of money to his own loss, in order to cancel the debt of one who owed him much and had nothing to pay, it would indeed be an act of grace and free forgiveness. Here is bankruptcy on the one hand and self-sacrifice on the other. And this is precisely the view which Scripture gives us of the Atonement. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?"

Nor is this view of the innocent suffering for the guilty inconsistent with our experience of daily life and the universal verdict of humanity. Do we not read with admiration and praise the records of noble self-sacrifice,—the wife suffering for the sins of her husband or of her child, the friend devoting himself for his friend, or the patriot for his country, the pure and righteous bearing the penalty incurred by the impure and unrighteous, simply because they are pure

and good. The language of the Apostle Peter, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God," does not offend our sense of justice. And, therefore, as we find the principle of vicarious suffering and substitution throughout the Scriptures applied to the Messiah, we have no difficulty in adopting the language of the Liturgy, when we say that Christ, by His one oblation of Himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.

But we are met by another objection. It is said, Are we to regard the Atonement as an equivalent, or in any sense a compensation rendered to Divine justice, for the sins that have been committed? The infliction of penalty upon Christ is so utterly opposed to our notions of the Divine love of the Father and of the Son, that it cannot be taken into the account of reconciliation. The answer to this is that, in the strict sense of the word, no compensation can be rendered to God. There is no necessity for us to regard the Atonement as an equivalent, in the sense in which we speak of a criminal undergoing the sentence of the law; but there is a necessity for God to show His abhorrence of sin, and to vindicate His attributes of truth and righteousness, that He may be just when He justifies, and clear when He is judged. If it is impossible for God to lie, it is impossible for God to connive at a lie. If God cannot do unjustly, He cannot connive at injustice. If God cannot be cruel, He cannot leave violence and cruelty

unavenged. How then has He solved this mystery? St. Paul tells us (Rom. viii. 3), "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:" or in other words, The law could not vindicate its own authority, or execute its own sentence, through the weakness of the flesh. It could accuse and threaten and condemn, but it could not put out of the way the transgression which it had condemned. It could kill the body, but it could not kill the soul of the sin. It could put the transgressor out of the congregation, anathematize him, and put him to death; but it could not give him a new heart, or renew a right spirit within him. Nay, further, the holiest man in Israel might offer himself as an atonement, but the blotting out of the name of Moses from the book of life would not blot out the sin of Israel from the book of God's remembrance. Even a Paul could not be crucified as a substitute for sinners. But God has not only shown His abhorrence of sin in the condemnation of it in the person of Jesus, but He has so united human nature with the Divine as that man is at one with God in the condemnation. And thus God looks upon the blood of the sin-offering; and man looks upon the blood of the sin-offering, and there is an atonement for him. (Levit. i. 4.) And in this wondrous fact lies the whole essence of the Atonement. "God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." And

as death was the penalty of sin, so nothing short of the endurance of the penalty would remove the condemnation: as it is written, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

II. But this will be more plain, if we consider what is the nature of Atonement in its Scriptural sense. Sin accuses God of being a severe Law-giver, asking more of His creatures than they can give in the way of obedience: in other words, God requires impossibilities, and then condemns the failure. But if God were to forgive by a mere act of His will, it would be virtually an acknowledgment of the severity of the law on the one hand, and of the impossibility of obedience on the other. But this God has obviated by the mediation of Christ. God was manifest in flesh. Made of a woman, made under the law, keeping every command, fulfilling all righteousness, magnifying the law and making it honourable, vindicating the truth of God and vindicating the obedience of man; and thus bringing God to man and man to God in a holy and loving bond of everlasting union. So that "mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." It falls infinitely short of atonement for sin to speak of it as a commercial transaction,—so much suffering in satisfaction for so much sin. It is true the bodily suffering of Jesus was intense; for He suffered all that flesh could bear, and then died: but

the bodily pains of the cross were as nothing compared to the mental and moral agony through which He passed, from His birth to His cross; when He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself; when He was numbered with the transgressors; when His familiar friend lifted up the heel against Him, and He was forsaken of God; and when it could be said of Jesus, as of no one else, Thy rebuke hath broken my heart.[a]

In all this we trace the crucifixion of sin in the flesh; and read, as in a sunbeam, the perfect harmony of the seeming contradiction, goodness, and severity. It pleased the Lord to bruise Him; and "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The life of Christ, as well as the death of Christ, was an atonement; and whatever objections are raised against it, on the score of its judicial aspect, we are prepared to risk the issue of the controversy,—not only upon the plain words of Scripture, but upon the experience of every soul in heaven or earth who has found peace through the blood of the cross.

There is yet another argument which we must not pass by without notice, because it arises out of the misstatements of those who believe in the doctrine of substitution and imputation. It is this. It is said that God was angry with sinners, and that Jesus came into the world to remove the wrath from the brow of His Father, and make Him willing to pardon. In this sense

[a] Ps. lxix. 20, Prayer-book version.

the idea of propitiation is explained. If this be so, then is the love of Christ greater than the love of the Father, and we lose sight of the everlasting source and origin of our atonement altogether. If there is one truth plainer than another in Scripture, it is that God is love, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. The plan of redemption was not an after-thought,—the restitution of a mistake which had been made in the creation; but an everlasting purpose of grace in Christ Jesus before the world began, which was made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ. (2 Tim. i. 8, 9.) When therefore we read the words of St. Peter,—"Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain,"—we see not the purpose of wrath, but of the love of God towards a guilty world. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Love is stamped upon every step in the wondrous revelation: "The eternal love of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." "God is love." "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him." "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father,

He hath declared Him." "As my Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you." "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "I am the good Shepherd: the good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep." "Therefore doth my Father love Me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." "This commandment have I received of my Father." Well may the Apostle bow his knees, and pray that he might know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge; and triumph when he asks, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" for I am persuaded that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

"Of what immeasurable love
Art Thou possest; who, when Thou could'st not die,
Wert fain to take our flesh and curse,
And for our sakes, in person, sin reprove!
That, by destroying that which tied Thy purse,
Thou might'st make way for liberality!"

Herbert.

All these Scriptures, as well as many others which we might quote, prove that the Atonement is as much a satisfaction offered to the love of God, as it is to His

justice. For sin is the abominable thing which God hates, and until its guilt and power be annihilated, He can find no rest for His love. "The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." We must now, in conclusion, touch briefly upon two points in this vast subject. The first is the personality, and the second the perfection of the vicarious suffering of Christ.

Objections have been raised to the use of the word substitution in speaking of the death of Christ. But if the personality of Christ be admitted, then must the representative character of His work and office as the Mediator be admitted also. And this is precisely the view which the Scripture gives of Messiah. From the beginning to the ending of the Bible the idea of reconciliation is revealed through the intervention of a Mediator,—the seed of the woman, the Redeemer, the Day's-man, the Surety of the better testament, the Mediator of the new covenant, the one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. What is the turning point of St. Paul's argument in Romans v., but that of mediation and imputation? The personality of the first Adam is compared with the personality of the second Adam. If by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so by the righteousness of One shall many be made righteous. In this the principle of substitution is involved, call it by what name you will. The sin of Adam was imputed; the right-

eousness of Christ is imputed. There are those who have not sinned, and who cannot sin, after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who nevertheless inherit all the penalty, moral and physical, of his sin. The head of the human family fell, and involved all his children in ruin. The sin of the father was visited upon the children, and thus "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." And so in like manner there are those who have not obeyed, and who cannot obey, the perfect will of God, after the example of Jesus; but who nevertheless receive by faith the gift of righteousness, through the obedience of Jesus Christ unto death. Even as Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness. "Now it was not written for His sake alone, that it was imputed unto Him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification."

Now, the atoning efficacy of Christ's death did not consist in physical suffering, but in the offering of Himself whole and entire as a man. It was the offering of love to God, and love to man. But this could not be manifested in spiritual or mental suffering alone, it must be in the body of His flesh. Adam sinned both in the spirit and in the flesh, and Christ suffered in the flesh and in the spirit. Atonement for sin did not consist in a consciousness of its exceeding sinfulness, and sorrow on account of it, but in

the actual endurance of its penalty. That penalty is death: the wages of sin is death. What shall we say then of a spotless One, who has no sin of His own, suffering the penalty which sinners deserved to suffer? Jesus voluntarily submitted to death, and that death which had a sting in it; it was an accursed death, in the agonies of which He was forsaken of God; and therefore when we use the very words of the prophets, which Jesus applied to Himself, "He was numbered among the transgressors," we mean literally, that He died as a trangressor dies, with the guilt of His transgression laid to his charge, and He became obedient unto death, under the righteous judgment of God. The sting of Christ's death was the sin of the world which He voluntarily undertook to bear; and when He drank the cup of trembling and of wrath, He did that personally in His own body which no other human being, or any created being in the whole world could do,—He exhausted the penalty; He satisfied, to the uttermost farthing, the sentence of God; He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and through death destroyed him that had the power of death. Thus, help was laid upon One that is mighty,—who His own self bear our sins in His own body on the tree. It is on this ground, and on this only, that we believe that there is one Mediator between God and man, and one only. One only name by which we can be saved. One who died and lives, and is alive for evermore. The chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely.

This may be further illustrated by the typical office of the high priest. There could be but one high priest, who was the representative of the people; being taken from among men and ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he might offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. Accordingly, once in the year he entered into the holy place to make an atonement for the people. The ordinal of that solemn proceeding is given in Lev. xvi., the peculiarity of which consisted in his being alone before the Lord. "There shall be no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel." (Ver. 17.) And then having sprinkled the blood of the goat, which had been slain as a sin-offering upon the mercy seat, he shall bring the live goat and shall "lay both his hands upon his head," "and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat;" "and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited;" and finally, the High Priest, having resumed his beautiful garments, went forth to bless the people. Now this is what no individual Israelite could have done for himself. He might have slain thousands of bulls and of goats in his own house, and might have gone through every form of self-mortification, but without the intervention of the priest he could find no

way of access to God and no assurance of pardon. And this is just the condition in which we find the Jews at the present moment,—without a prince, without a sacrifice, and without an ephod: they have no temple in which God is present, and they have no priest to offer sacrifice, incense, and intercession. They are ignorant of the comfortable word, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins." The high priest was a type of Christ, who has not "entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." "Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves; but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." If this be not substitution, it is difficult to say what is.

This argument is perfectly consistent with all our feelings with regard to reconciliation. For in order that reconciliation may be effected between two parties by means of a substitute, the four following requirements [b] must be taken into account.

(1) The consent of the offended party must be given to the appointment of a substitute in the place of the

[b] See the excellent sermon by Robert Hall upon this subject.

offender. It has been observed, "that any departure from the ordinary course of law can only proceed from the same authority which enacted the law. It is competent only to the lawgiver to divert the stream of justice from its natural course, and to cause it to discharge itself upon a different object from that against which it was originally directed. If such a proceeding be permitted, it must be with the full consent of that supreme authority, which is always supposed to be insulted and injured by all crimes and civil offences." What then can be more distinct than the utterances of inspiration upon this point? "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon Him. Behold I have given Him for a Witness to the people, a Leader and Commander to the people." (Is. lv. 4.) "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto Him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." (John iii. 34—35.) "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world." (xvi. 28.) "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do." (xvii. 4.) These are the words of Jesus, and with them agree the words of the Apostle in Rom. iii. 24—26, "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth (*προέθετο*) to be a propitation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness.....that He might

be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." If ever the consent of an offended party were given to the appointment of a substitute, it was when God sent His only begotten Son into the world that we might live through Him.

(2) The act of the substitute must be entirely voluntary. The principles of justice would be altogether violated, if the law compelled an innocent man to suffer for the guilty; but it is consistent with equity to admit the intervention of a surety or bail, who in his own person or property will voluntarily take the place of the offender. The true ends of justice are established when the law is vindicated. Now, if we apply this principle to the history of redemption by Jesus Christ, we shall find that in type and prophecy and act our blessed Lord yielded up Himself, as a free-will offering for the sins of the world. He was not dragged reluctantly to the altar; He went like Isaac, in loving obedience to the will of His Father. "He was lead as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." He had a baptism to be baptized with, and was straitened until it was accomplished. He delighted to do the will of God. The zeal of His house consumed Him, and as He said Himself, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." The great love wherewith God hath loved us was not more conspicious in the gift of His only beloved Son, than in the voluntary sacrifice

and consecration of Jesus to the life of humiliation and the accursed death of the cross.

(3) A third requisite is, that the substitute must be entirely free from all participation in the sin which has exposed the offender to the sentence of the law. For it is very evident, that no one is in a position to clear another from the demands of justice, unless he is clear himself. This view of the subject gives an emphatic solemnity to the words of the Psalmist, "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him: for the redemption of their soul is precious, and it ceaseth for ever." (Ps. xlix. 7—8.) Where among the sons of men could this condition be found, except in the person of Jesus, who was that Holy child: without sin,—"holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners." He alone could take His stand before God and man, and say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" It was this perfect obedience to the law of God which gave Him the preeminence as the righteous One, making manifest the righteousness of God in the righteousness of humanity; and thus Jesus became the suitable and sufficient substitute for the sinner.

(4) The last requisite is, that there should be a sort of equality, and community of nature, between the substitute and the person whom he represents. This is a very important consideration, for there is a righteous principle involved in the law of Moses, which required the nearest of kin to redeem a forfeited inheritance, or

to avenge a murder. There must be sympathy of nature and of interest in all that concerns the honour and well-being of the family, in order to bring into action the qualities required by such an office. And it is in this point of view that the heart of the believer finds repose and delight in Jesus. Our Redeemer is made like unto us in all things, sin only excepted. He partakes of our nature: flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone. He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, being "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin," and is not "ashamed to call us brethren." Where shall we find a friend who loves us better than Himself, and who so loves us as to lay down His life for us? Where is the friend who loveth at all times, and sticketh closer than a brother? Where is the friend who knows every thought and every feeling and every desire of our hearts, whose compassions fail not, whose gentleness breaks not the bruised reed and whose patience quenches not the smoking flax? This is our beloved, and this is our friend, O daughter of Jerusalem! Take from us the vicarious obedience of Christ, and we no longer see the ladder reaching from earth to heaven, but the ruins of a tower of Babel, proclaiming throughout all generations the inability of man to rise above himself.

And now, lastly, under no other view of Atonement can we find perfection. As Jesus has offered one offering once for all, so He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified by faith in Him, and there re-

maineth no more sacrifice for sin. Either therefore we are complete in Him, or we have yet some offering and recompense to render unto God in order to make up what is lacking in the work of our salvation. When Jesus said, "It is finished," the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, showing that the whole system of sacrifice under the old dispensation was abolished, and that now the offering of a sweet-smelling savour had come up before God with acceptance. He had finished transgression and made an end of sin and brought in an everlasting righteousness. He was declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, and by His ascension into heaven. He was accepted as the King and Priest upon the throne, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us. Now let us put this to our experience. Will anything short of this satisfy the conscience of an awakened sinner? Here is the accumulated guilt of years, actual and original, on the one hand, and the Holy God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, in the other. How is peace to be established? The imperfect obedience of the past, and the promised obedience of the future, will not put away the guilt which has been contracted. The law which has been broken demands satisfaction, and where is the sinner who in his own strength and wisdom can clothe himself in a righteousness which God can accept? There is one word, and one only, which will bring peace. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin

of the world." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." The fountain of forgiving love flows from beneath the cross; life springs up out of death. What is the argument that will reach the hardest heart, or cheer the despairing sinner, but the love of God, free, full, everlasting, and unchangeable in Christ Jesus our Lord. "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." What will sustain the fainting, restore the waverer, and comfort the mourner, but the blessed invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What will effectually silence every doubt as to the extent of the salvation, but the unlimited and universal invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come: for the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and let him that heareth say, Come; and whosoever will let him come, and take of the water of life freely." There is a present salvation, and a personal salvation, and a perfected salvation in Jesus, and nothing can be added to it, and nothing can be taken from it. We stand or fall by our acceptance or rejection of it. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John iii. 36.)

We have thus endeavoured to clear the ground upon which this grand foundation of the faith stands, and to meet some of the objections which have proved a stumbling-block to many deeply exercised minds. But we must not forget that the mysteries of Redemption

cannot be expressed in language which the carnal mind will receive. They must be spiritually discerned. All we can hope is that the study and discussion of the subject with our Bibles open before us, may lead to clearer and fuller understanding of the Truth. We are not afraid of inquiry, or of the closest investigation of every word, and every text which refers in any way to the glorious work of Atonement, being fully persuaded that nothing can shake the house which is built upon a rock, or, to use the eloquent words of a living Prelate of our Church:—

"Rash speculations and unwarrantable dogmatism grow round every truth in process of time, just as suburbs grow round a fortress in long years of peace. But all such outlying buildings only endanger the citadel, by giving shelter to the foe; and he is the wisest defender of the citadel of truth who, with most unsparing hand pulls down the long suburbs of opinion which alike conceal its proportions and imperil its safety. But whether friend or foe demolish them, let us rejoice in their destruction; believing as we do, that the walls of the fortress will yet stand out, when the dust and the smoke of the contest has passed away, in clearer and bolder relief, and therefore more impregnable strength than ever."



Justification.

BY THE

VEN. ARCHDEACON PREST, M.A.

IV.

JUSTIFICATION.

THE importance of acquiring and holding the truth of God on this momentous question cannot be exaggerated: for upon the acceptance or rejection of this especial portion of God's revelation hinges the salvation of the soul. This accounts for the solicitude with which the Author of the Bible has presented to man every kind of evidence by which the true doctrine could be sustained, and every variety of statement which could explain it. It is asserted, assumed, defended, defined; it is contrasted with the perversions of it, and guarded against abuses. Nor does the history of any doctrine afford more welcome proof of that tender mercy of our God which has provided that early and subtle divergences from the just line of truth should provoke, before the days of inspiration ceased, instant and decisive detections of error, and definitions of God's will and way still more exact and conclusive than those already in existence. This characteristic of

the controversy appears to indicate the line which may still be followed with advantage.

Although there is doubtless at the bottom of every heart, which will give itself any pause for introspection, a desire to know the conditions, and to ensure the existence, of peace with its God, yet when those conditions have been ascertained to be fatal to nature's pride, man's instant impulse is to discover some evasion of the force of any positive statement, however plain, of the method of Justification. Every refutation of this pernicious ingenuity tends to free the light of truth from the earth-born clouds which obscure it, and to clear its path to the happy heart which it is destined to illumine. And although such a process cannot, within the limits of a paper like the present, be exhaustive of all error, it may, if coupled with a condensed compilation of the positive doctrines of Holy Scripture, cause the grand truth under discussion to stand forth in its massive and well-defined solidity. Luther, as is well known, did not scruple to describe the doctrine of Justification by faith only, as "the criterion of a standing or of a falling Church." Calvin asserted it to be "that one head, which if it were yielded whole and entire, it would not pay the cost to make any great question about other matters of controversy with Rome." Nor was the appreciation of its importance less fully confessed by those who impugned it: for the Canonists of the Council of Trent are said, by its historian, to have acted on this principle,—that "he, who would establish

the body of Catholic doctrine" (by which term he meant indulgences, penance, purgatory, and the sacrifice of the mass), "must overthrow the heresy of Justification by Faith alone." This witness is true. If you would mar the stream you must taint the fountain. Jordan is fed by the springs of Lebanon: and they, in turn, drink in the dews of Hermon, which fall on her cedars from heaven's pure sky. And so the waters rush down their rocky channels, clear and sparkling, that the traveller, far down in the thirsty plain below, may drink of the brook in the way, and lift up his head. Such is the grand doctrine of Justification by Faith alone. Revealed from heaven: one of the gracious dews of the Spirit; flowing through countless rills of reasoning and promise in the Word of God; clear and refreshing as long as it is unadulterated, it bears within it such vivifying energy as even to wake a life beneath the very ribs of spiritual death. But Rome's poisoned fountain sends forth only deceptive and deadly streams. Nor can a more apposite image of them be adduced than the wells of ancient Athens, into which the enemy had cast noxious drugs, and into which they themselves had plunged the poisoned bodies of their dead, so that down every channel of their city crept the delusive tide, and that, which should have been the water of life, filled their homes with death in every form.

It is not an easy task to discriminate the slight shades of early divergence from right doctrine. It is still more difficult to define and develope them. But

the attempt is rendered practicable when the Great and Infallible Teacher has Himself indicated the testing line and suggested the language. Let us then hear what God the Lord shall say. Far back in the history of man, He tells us of a blot on the fair face of nature; and when we search for the cause, we find it in the very first of our race. Fashioned by God's hand, and sent forth with the Divine assertion that he was "very good," man corrupted his way, sinned, and soon merited another verdict,—that he was guilty: guilty beyond his own redemption, obnoxious to that everlasting expulsion from the presence of God's glory which constitutes the spiritual death. Was it then come to this? Should God's last and fairest work be marred for ever; and should Satan hold jubilee with his malicious hosts, as having foiled the purposes of the Almighty? Not even his craft could foresee a practicable way of deliverance. Much less could man cancel or evade the sentence he had earned. Then from the fathomless depths of the vast heart of Love, Mercy sprang into being full grown; and down to this earth she sped, bearing the blessed revelation in which man might read an answer to the yearnings of his down-cast heart, and learn how he could be justified with God. And that plan was nothing else and nothing less than this,—that One, "who knew no sin should be made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

Now *what does this mean?*

In an ancient city, a young man admired and beloved

by many, had committed the foul crime of adultery. The inflexible law of the city had enacted as the penalty the total loss of both eyes. Many mourned for the criminal: but there was one who grieved more than they all,—the King, Zaleucus; for the evil-doer was none other than his own son. But justice must be honoured and appeased. The executioner has already quenched the light of one eye. A moment more and blindness will have claimed her miserable victim. But the King descends from the throne, and bids the executioner turn his weapon upon him. And thus the penalty is paid,—paid by the joint sufferings of the King and of the criminal. Amidst the shudder of horror which thrilled the gazing crowd, there arose a cry of sympathy, and plaudits of admiration at this marvellous mingling of mercy with justice.

Now is this, in substance, the method by which "God is just and yet justifieth the ungodly"? Rome answers "Yes!" but we, with all the energy of most earnest protest, cry, "Not so!" The difference lies not in this, —that the Saviour is high above the kings of earth; nor in this,—that His agony was unparalleled by the sufferings of any mortal man; nor in this,—that there was an incalculable excess in the proportion of His expiation to our offence over that which the ancient King's self-imposed penalty bore to the crime committed. No: the contrast lies here,—that the atonement is effected in our case by a totally and absolutely different procedure. The King does not assume only a proportion

of the penalty which the criminal is spared. But from His throne of supernal bliss and glory the Atoner descends to take willingly upon Himself every part and portion, every stripe and scar, of the penalty; steps into the place and degradation of the criminal; bears not his misery only, but his sin; and will not suffer the offender to endure one jot or tittle of the punishment he has incurred, but says, "My life for thine! Go thou in peace: thy faith hath saved thee!"

Nay, more,—even more than all this. It is no small thing that man should step from that bar barely pardoned: it is a marvel that he is not compelled to march to the place of execution. But how much more marvellous (and yet, thank God, how unquestionably *true*) that man leaves that bar, in a most important sense, no longer himself, no longer the condemned criminal that he was, but the justified man, clad and covered with the robe of Christ's perfect righteousness; so that when God looks upon him He sees one who has "put on Christ," and who is therefore "found in Him:" He looks no longer on the polluted violater of the law, but on its Divine fulfiller. And the whilom rebel, not pardoned only, but "accepted in the Beloved," enters the path of sanctification, to march along its track of brightness, sustained by the abounding goodness of God from grace to grace, and at length from grace to glory.

Such is the Gospel of the grace of God. With this let us contrast the definitions of the Council of Trent. That these are authoritative and binding upon the con-

science of the Romanist is sufficiently proved by the declaration which occurs in the Creed of Pope Pius: "I receive and embrace all and every one of the things which have been defined and declared in the Holy Council of Trent concerning Original Sin and Justification." Would to God that the Romanist would assert the value of his Bible, and the freedom of his conscience, by constituting God's Word the test of his Church! Would that we could see him going to his worship,—as many of his Protestant neighbours do, and as *all ought to do*,—not simply with a Prayer-book, but with God's Word in their hand also, and with a steady intention to try every spirit, whether it be of God. Missal and Breviary would, ere long, find the Bible a most uncongenial companion. Can light and darkness dwell together? No more impressive scene rewards the student of nature than the victory of morning over the gloom of conquered night.

> "The gradual shine
> Spreads o'er heaven's verge its lengthened line:
> Cloud after cloud begins to glow
> And tinge the changeful deep below,
> Now sombre red, now amber bright,
> Till upward bursts the blazing light."

Alas, for Rome's love of the darkness! Would that she might allow the entrance of that Word which giveth light! Missal and Breviary would soon be banished to their kindred shades, and they that walk in darkness would rejoice in the path of light.

but because of a righteousness implanted in us: that is, because of the work of the Holy Spirit in our souls. St. Paul's account of the matter stands out in strongest contrast (Rom. iii. 22): "The righteousness of Christ is unto all and upon all them that believe." "Unto all;" and therefore not from them, but bestowed upon them: "upon all;" and therefore not within them, but without them: "upon them," as a garment to cover the unworthiness of man. Or, to borrow Hooker's words,—

"Faith is the only hand which putteth on Christ to Justification; and Christ the only garment which, being so put on, covereth the shame of our defiled nature; hideth the imperfection of our works; and presenteth us blameless before God; before whom, otherwise, the weakness of our faith were sufficient to make us culpable,—yea, to shut us out of the kingdom of heaven, into which nothing that is not absolute can enter." (Ser. ii. 31.)

A weighty deliverance by one who deserves to be had in honour for his wise words of truth and soberness! for, as he argues, what can appear before the holy God save that which is absolute, perfect, guiltless? But man's righteousness, whether by that term we understand his own natural strivings, or even his attainments after grace bestowed, is always imperfect; else why confess sins day by day? why that most fitting lamentation before God's footstool, "We have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep: there is no health in us"? If these confessions be warranted by the teaching of Holy Scripture (and they are

couched in its own words), if this be the language of simplicity and truth, where shall that absolute righteousness be discovered which can challenge the scrutiny of Omniscient Holiness? "Not in man," replies our Church (Articles xi., xii., xiii.) "In him only," saith the Scripture, "who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners,—the Lamb, without blemish and without spot, that taketh away the sins of the world."

But the divergence from truth becomes wider. If the early aberration seem but small, yet let us mark it. No error is really trivial, if by it souls be brought into peril. It is over a pebble, rather than upon a rock, that men stumble. "He that despiseth small things shall fall by little and little."

The next affirmation of the Tridentine Fathers is, "Whosoever shall declare that men are justified solely by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, or the remission of sin, to the exclusion of grace and charity, which is shed abroad in the hearts and *inheres in them;* or that the grace by which we are justified is *only the favour of God;* let him be accursed."

One cannot read attentively this subtile statement without feeling that it conflicts with the wisdom that is from above. Did not the Spirit guide the pen that wrote, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Ephes. ii. 9.)

Rome's next detraction from the single and sufficient righteousness of Christ, consists in the affirmation

of a second, and (inasmuch as it supplements the deficiences of the former) a superior Justification. The former, indeed, is the beginning of grace in a sinner's soul; the latter is the sinner justifying himself by the merits of that grace carried on into obedience. "Whosoever shall affirm that Justification received is not preserved, and even increased in the sight of God by good works, but that works are only the fruits and evidences of Justification, and not causes of increase thereof, let him be accursed." Do then our senses deceive us, when we read the inspired declaration that man is "justified by grace without the deeds of the law;" that "by the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified"? There must be no misunderstanding here. We repudiate Antinomianism. We believe that God requires from His servants not faith only, but also good works. The fruits must evidence the quality of the tree, but yet the quality of the tree does not depend upon them. Good works, if time serve and opportunity be vouchsafed, there must be, if there be living, justifying, faith. But with even these good works there is mingled so much of what is imperfect, that even at their very best, instead of meriting reward from God, they deserve His displeasure. The holier a man becomes, the more keenly is he conscious of his own unholiness. So that surely all claims of merit before God, all idea of earning the increase of His blessings by any good thing in us, is the acme of presumption. It would make the sinner share the merit

of the Saviour. It would virtually permit him to take His place by the side of the Saviour on the atoning tree, instead of requiring him, with an incessant sense of deep demerit, to bend low at the foot of the cross.

And yet we are startled by a still more audacious reiteration of the merit of man's works:—

"Whosoever shall affirm that the good works of a justified man are in such a sense the gift of God, that they are not also his worthy merits; or that he, being justified by his good works, which are wrought in him through the grace of God and the merits of Jesus Christ, of whom he is a living member, does not really deserve increase of grace, eternal life, the enjoyment of that eternal life, if he dies in a state of grace and even an increase of glory, let him be accursed."

—Upon this assertion it may be observed that the righteousness of Christ is either infinite or finite. If it be finite its efficacy is limited, nor can it be offered for the sins of the whole world. But if it be infinite there is no possibility of exhausting it, and therefore no pretext for the attempt to supplement it. We contend that the righteousness of Christ is absolute and infinite, and that if a man be invested with that righteousness he cannot, by the nature of the case, have any augmentation of merit. What can be added to the illimitable? How strange then the effrontery which, whilst professing to hold that Christ's merits are infinite, yet declares that the obedience of a justified man entitles him to merit, and not only deserves increase of grace but increase of glory?

Surely we discover here the *rationale* of that complicated and imposing structure of rites and ceremonies, of sacramental salvation, of sacerdotal mediation, which the theologians of Rome have reared with intent, like that of the builders of ancient Babel, that its summit should reach to heaven. Admit that the sinner's salvation depends wholly upon the merits and grace of Christ, and you make it free,—independent of Church, of priest, of human excellences. But if you affirm that it depends partly indeed on Christ, but also in a perceptible measure upon himself, and through himself on all the human aids he needs,—on Church, on priest, on ceremonies, on sacraments,—you have placed the sinner's soul under the power of the Church, and in the keeping of the priest. The glorious doctrine of Justification once and for all by the righteousness of Christ, places the believer directly and independently in the presence of God, to whose justice Christ has paid for him all the penalty incurred. And thus Christ Jesus becomes to the ransomed "all in all," from their first glimpse of hope to the last victorious struggle in which they pass from earth's shadows and stains to that world of light, whose searching scrutiny of uncreated brightness cannot reveal a blot or blemish upon the white robes given unto every one of them.

If it be asked why labour has been expended on the refutation of Rome's errors respecting Justification, it is obvious to reply that one purpose of this paper is to expose the subterfuges to which the natural heart has

recourse, when offended at the unwelcome humiliation which an acceptance of the truth entails. And the scheme propounded by the Church of Rome is in fact man's natural reluctance developed into a system of ingenious evasions of the truth. But there is another reason for the course adopted. It is not less necessary that the Tractarian theory be refuted; and a brief comparison of its elements with the constituent members of Rome's vast fabric of fallacies will show that if the latter shall have been overthrown, the former must be involved in its ruin. For it will be found that the Tractarian Justification, like that of the Tridentine Doctors, is not acquittal, or the counting of a wrongdoer spotless because the extrinsic virtue of the Atonement has been applied to his condition; but that it is a certain moral and spiritual change, effected by the indwelling of the Saviour. Dr. Newman, in his lectures on this subject, writes (pp. 160—167):—

"Whereas Justification is the application of Christ's merits to the individual, that application is the imparting of an inward gift: in other words, Justification is a real and actual communication to the soul of the Atonement through the ministration of the Spirit. . . . .Now in truth, a privilege is most explicitly promised us in Scripture, which accurately answers to this description, as being at once the special fruit of Christ's sacrifice, and also an inward gift possessed and residing within us; I mean the habitation of God the Father, and the Word Incarnate, through the Holy Ghost. If this be so, we have found what we sought. This is to be justified,—to receive the Divine Presence within us, and to be made a temple of

the Holy Ghost. . . .Christ then is our righteousness by dwelling in us by the Spirit: He justifies by entering into us; He continues to justify by remaining in us. This is really and truly our justification: not faith; not holiness; not (much less) a mere imputation; but through God's mercy, the very presence of Christ."

Uncertain though the sound be which many writers of the Tractarian school utter, there can be no doubt about the definitions laid down in these extracts. Justification is declared not to be the imputation of the righteousness of another. It is, on the contrary, declared to be communicated, and to be then resident within ourselves. It is indeed true that Christ is not excluded from the process; but He is not admitted to that place and office which our Church, on the authority of Holy Scripture, assigns to Him. This is more clearly seen in some of those passages which describe the means by which Justification is obtained, and which must therefore be quoted here in anticipation of allusions to them hereafter.

"Faith," says Dr. Newman (pp. 169, 257), "secures to the soul continually those gifts which Baptism primarily conveys. Faith being the appointed representative of Baptism, derives its authorty and virtue from that which it represents. It is justifying because of Baptism. And here lie the cardinal mistakes of the views on this subject which are now in esteem. They make faith the sole instrument, not after Baptism, but before; whereas Baptism is the primary instrument, and creates faith to be what it is, and otherwise is not, giving it power and rank, and, as it were, constituting it its own successor. . . . . If Justification

is conveyed peculiarly through the Sacraments, as Holy Communion conveys a more awful presence of God than Holy Baptism, so must it be the instrument of a higher Justification. On the other hand, those who are declining in their obedience, as they are quenching the light within them so are they diminishing their Justification."

The "presence of Christ," then, is now discerned to be the peculiar "presence" attributed to Him in the Sacraments. The benefit which we have been accustomed to consider an act of God in our favour is defined to be a sustained religious condition of our own. And the mode by which that condition is to be sustained, or may be impaired, is the frequent reception or the omission to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Yet the divines of the school to which Dr. Newman belonged before he joined the Church of Rome, affect to hold our formularies, and amongst them that eleventh Article, which affirms,—"We are accounted (reputamur) righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings; wherefore that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the Homily of Justification." Now the Homily to which this reference is made is one of those put forth (as the preface says) "to avoid the manifold enormities, which heretofore by false doctrines have crept into the Church, to drive away erroneous and poisonous doctrines." So that it is unfair to attempt (as Knox does in his Remains) to rob

them of their force, by asserting that "neither there or elsewhere in the Homilies is it the object to lay down theological definitions, but rather to furnish popular useful instruction." What then is the language of this authoritative exposition of our Church's doctrine?

"Christ is now the righteousness of all them that truly believe in Him. He for them paid their ransom: He for them fulfilled the law in His life; so that now, in Him and by Him, every true Christian may be called a fulfiller of the law; for as much as that which their infirmity lacked Christ's justice hath supplied. The Apostle toucheth specially three things, which must go together in our Justification: upon God's part, His great mercy and grace; upon Christ's part, justice,—that is, the satisfaction of God's justice, or the price of our redemption by the offering of His body and shedding of His blood, with fulfilling of the law perfectly and thoroughly; and, upon our part, true and lively faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, which yet is not ours but by God's working in us. And so the grace of God doth not shut out the justice of God, but only shutteth out the justice of man: that is to say, the justice of our works, as to be merits of deserving our Justification. And therefore St. Paul declareth nothing upon the behalf of man concerning his Justification, but only a true and lively faith: which, nevertheless, is the gift of God, and not man's only work without God. And yet that faith doth not shut out repentance, hope, love, dread, and the fear of God, to be joined with faith in every man that is justified: but it shutteth them out from the office of justifying."

How clear the ring of these last words! And how pointedly do they assert that, where Romanism and

Tractarianism are in terms scarcely divergent and in spirit identical, our Church, both in terms and in spirit, dissents from both. They hold a righteousness inherent; we, an extrinsic: we hold a righteousness graciously imputed; they, a righteousness imparted and infused: they repudiate Justification by faith alone,—whilst we affirm it, and shut out our own works from the office of justifying.

The examination which has thus been made of the most subtle and systematic evasions of the truth which human ingenuity has hitherto propounded, clears the way for the simple and refreshing recitation of the Divine plan, as recorded in the Epistle to the Romans. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight." Therefore Justification must of necessity be *extrinsic.* "God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, that He might be just, and yet the Justifier of him that believeth." Such is the *provision* for Justification made by Omniscient Love. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Here is Justification *applied.* "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Here we have the *consequences* of the sinner's Justification. And if it be asked what are its *effects* upon the justified: "I beseech you," cries the Apostle, "by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." Designed by the love of the eternal Father, wrought out by the spotless life and atoning death of the eternal Son,

applied by the grace of the eternal Spirit, "Justification by Faith only" honours the law and humbles the sinner, fills life with holy gratitude, and gilds death with certain glory.

This paper would be unpardonably defective if it did not touch upon the means by which the Justification above defined is to be appropriated by man. We have already seen that in the Romish system baptism is credited with the honour of being "the instrumental cause of Justification" (Council of Trent, Sess. vi., c. 7), and that a secondary Justification has been invented, the consequence of that sustained and meritorious godliness of which baptism is the source. In the spirit of these assertions, Dr. Newman wrote (Lectures on Justification, pp. 271, seq.):—

"The new birth is an act, an initiatory act; forgiveness is an act, but justification is a state; being in God's favour is a state. It is nothing to the purpose then to show that faith is connected in Scripture with Justification or with God's favour. Is it connected with the new birth, with the washing away of sin? I repeat, the act of Justification is expressly ascribed to baptism as an immediate means. Is it anywhere ascribed to faith?"

Again: when pressed by the apparently clear statements of the eleventh Article, one of the writers previously quoted is compelled to confess that it "certainly puts forward the reputative idea. But is it," he asks, "or is it not, subordinately to an understood moral Justification which precedes in order of nature? Is it

the reckoning which God is said to make of us, independent of His own work in us? I conceive that the reckoning is not meant to be independent of a previously wrought root of righteousness: because it is not merely said 'only for the merits of our Lord, and not for our own works and deservings, are we counted righteous before God,' but 'by faith' comes in as a qualification on our part, without which the merit of Christ will not avail for us." (Knox's Remains.) It is singular that dependence should have been placed upon a sophistry which the Latin version of the Article so clearly overthrows. For it runs thus: "Tantum *propter* meritum Domini ac Servatoris Nostri Jesu Christi *per* fidem non *propter* opera et merita nostra, justi coram Deo reputamur." The distinction between the instrumental medium and the meritorious cause of Justification could not, surely, have been more significantly drawn than by the use of the different prepositions employed.

Yet not even these extracts suffice to give an adequate idea of the extravagances which, as a Nemesis, beset those who repudiate faith only as the means by which Christ's righteousness is applied to the sinner's soul. For example: in the fully authorized book of devotions called "The Garden of the Soul," the sick man is thus instructed: "Beg that God will accept of your pains and uneasiness, *in union with* the sufferings of your Saviour Christ, in deduction of the punishment due to your sins." Again, in the Missal we read, "Let our fasts, we beseech Thee, O Lord, be acceptable to

Thee, that by atoning for our sins they may both make us worthy of Thy grace, and bring us to the everlasting effects of Thy promise." True that (although this prayer does not) many such prayers in the Missal end with what is pleaded as being a saving clause,—"through Christ our Lord." But if that clause has been prefaced by such a prayer, the wrong done to the all-sufficient Saviour has surely been aggravated rather than extenuated. If it be after all *our own righteousness* which is thus offered through Christ, what is this but to make the Mediator accessory to His own degradation? Once more: the Council of Trent decrees "Whosoever shall affirm that when the grace of Justification is received the offence of the penitent sinner is forgiven, and sentence of eternal punishment reversed; and that there remains no temporal penalty to be endured before his entrance into the kingdom of heaven, either in this world or in a future state of purgation, let him be accursed." To this virtual denial of the perfection of the Redeemer's righteousness shall be opposed the noble burst of unwonted enthusiasm to which his intense gratitude for a realized and complete salvation stirred the sobriety of the judicious Hooker:—

"Although in ourselves we be altogether sinful and unrighteous, yet even the man, which in himself is impious, full of iniquity, full of sin, him being found in Christ through faith, and having his sin in hatred through repentance; him God beholdeth with a gracious eye, putting away his sin by not imputing it; taketh quite away the punishment due thereunto by pardoning it, and accepteth

him in Jesus Christ as perfectly righteous as if he had fulfilled all that is commanded him in the law: shall I say more perfectly righteous than if himself had fulfilled the whole law? I must take heed what I say: but the Apostle saith, 'God made Him, which knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.' Such we are in the sight of God the Father, as is the very Son of God Himself. Let it be counted folly, or phrensy, or fury, or whatsoever. It is our wisdom and our comfort; we care for no knowledge in the world but this,—that man hath sinned, and God hath suffered; that God hath made Himself the sin of men, and that men are made the righteousness of God."

There remains only space for an appeal, and for a summary of the contrasts which have been drawn. Of the doctrines which have been propounded, which is the more capable of meeting the sinner's evil case? that which assigns to him the merit, and therefore the task, of making his peace with God; or that which gives him the true peace with God, and which urges him to work, not *for* life, but *from* life; not to earn forgiveness, but ingratitude for a full forgiveness fully provided? Which of the doctrines propounded is the more calculated to inspire love? and love, be it remembered, is the fulfilling of the law. He that loves lives, and living, obeys. We have been told of a system which suspends forgiveness partly on Christ, but partly on the sinner himself,—a doctrine which leaves him at the mercy of his priest's "intention," of his Church's truth, and of his own zeal and devoutness. But the Scriptural doctrine is, Live, because thy chains have

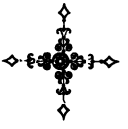
been broken, and thy prison-doors opened. Walk in the liberty of love before thy reconciled Father. He to whom little has been forgiven loves with but a halting love; but love knows no reservations when fastened upon One to whom she owes her all.

Which doctrine tends the more to humble man? Here is a sure touchstone. What humbles man is of God: what elates him, of Satan. The Gospel doctrine that in us dwelleth no good thing, that the righteousness in which we may appear before God is another's, not our own; imputed, not inherent; and that any meetness wrought in man is a preparation only, and not a title, for the inheritance of the purchased possession,—such doctrine confesses its Author, for it humbles its receivers: whereas the fatal admission of the first thought of human merit is the symptom of that pride which goeth before a fall.

Which system of doctrine gives glory to God in the highest? and which tends to His dishonour? The one represents God, not as abating anything from the demands of His eternal law, not as accepting a partial satisfaction in lieu of a complete obedience, not as admitting that tears, and fastings, and multiplied "communions," and works of charity, can take away guilt; but as accepting and being well-pleased with the consummate obedience and complete atonement of our spotless Substitute,—an obedience so absolutely perfect that to it can be added nothing, so faultless that not even fiends can detect in it a flaw. The other, by

offering in satisfaction to the Holy One that which is lame, by attempting to mingle with the pure that which is polluted, derogates from the majesty of His justice, or denies the perfection of His omniscience.

Happy, thrice happy, the sin-stricken soul which finds its all in Christ! Terrible the despair of those who shall have earned for themselves the reproach, "Ye have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters: and have hewed out for yourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."



Regeneration.

BY THE

REV. CANON RYLE, M.A.

V.

REGENERATION.

REGENERATION is a doctrine of Christianity which, in point of importance, stands second only to justification. It is one of those grand "necessaria" of our theological system, about which unity ought to be greatly desired. Yet it is a melancholy fact that there is no subject in religion about which English Churchmen appear so hopelessly divided!

It is vain to expect that the statements I am about to make in this paper concerning Regeneration, will satisfy everybody. The utmost I propose to attempt is to present the subject in a clear, plain, and intelligible manner, from the standpoint which I occupy. I wish those who do not agree with me about this famous doctrine, to understand distinctly what I and many other Evangelical Churchmen believe to be the truth.

In discussing this thorny question, the first question which a Christian ought to ask, is, "What saith the Scripture?" A Churchman at any rate should never forget the great principle of the sixth Article,—that

"whatsoever is not read in Scripture, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man as an article of faith." Take the first twelve educated and intelligent Christians whom you may meet in Piccadilly at four o'clock in the afternoon. Shut them up in a room with twelve Bibles, and keep away from them all other books of every description. Ask them to draw from the Bible, and put down in black and white, an account of Regeneration. Ask them to dismiss from their minds, as far as possible, all preconceived notions and opinions on the subject. Ask them to confine themselves strictly to the statement about Regeneration which they find in the Word of God. If such a report could possibly be obtained from such a committee, it would be deeply interesting. It is in the spirit of such an imaginary report that I desire to take up the subject to-day.

The precise word "Regeneration" is only found in two places in the New Testament. In one of these two places it is mentioned as a thing accompanying, and instrumental to salvation: "According to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus iii. 4.) In the other place it is clearly used as describing that new dispensation and order of things which will prevail at the second advent of Jesus Christ:—"In the Regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on His throne, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones." (Matt. xix. 28.) In this last sense the word is only used once, and appears to answer to

that "restitution of all things" which is mentioned by St. Peter. (Acts iii. 19.)

The literal and primary meaning of the word Regeneration is well known to all who have any acquaintance with Greek. It means "new birth," or "being born again." This is an expression which, with various shades of difference, is found thirteen times in the New Testament;—six times in the Gospel of St. John, once in the first Epistle of St. Peter, and six times in the first Epistle of St. John. John i. 13; iii. 3, 5, 6, 7, 8; 1 Peter i. 23; 1 John ii. 29; iii. 9; iv. 7; v. 1, 4, 18. In each of these texts the idea of Regeneration will be found, though not the precise word. Common sense and fair interpretation of the Greek language point out that "regenerate," "born again," "born of the Spirit," and "born of God," are all one and the same thing. To say to any Greek scholar that it is possible to be "regenerate," and yet at the same time not to be "born again," would be saying that which is ridiculous and absurd. The man "regenerate" and the man "born again" are one and the same person.

The doctrinal meaning of Regeneration may be defined as follows. It is that inward change of heart and character which the Holy Ghost produces in a man when he becomes a true Christian,—a change so complete that no word could be chosen more fit to express it than the word Regeneration, or new birth.

This change of heart is spoken of continually in the Bible, under various emblems and figures.

Ezekiel calls it "a taking away the stony heart, and giving an heart of flesh;"—"a giving a new heart, and putting within us a new spirit." (Ezek. xi. 19; xxxvi. 26.)

The Apostle John sometimes calls it being "born of God,"—sometimes being "born again,"—sometimes being "born of the Spirit." (John i. 13; iii. 3; iii. 6.)

The Apostle Peter, in the Acts, calls it "repenting and being converted." (Acts iii. 19.)

The Epistle to the Romans speaks of it as a "being alive from the dead." (Rom. vi. 13.)

The second Epistle to the Corinthians calls it "being a new creature: old things have passed away, and all things become new." (2 Cor. v. 17.)

The Epistle to the Ephesians speaks of it as a resurrection together with Christ: "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephes. ii. 1); as "a putting off the old man, which is corrupt—being renewed in the spirit of our mind,—and putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." (Ephes. iv. 22, 24.)

The Epistle to the Colossians calls it "a putting off the old man with his deeds; and putting on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him." (Coloss. iii. 9, 10.)

The Epistle to Titus calls it "the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." (Titus iii. 5.)

The first Epistle of Peter speaks of it as "a being called out of darkness into God's marvellous light."

(1 Peter ii. 9.) And the second Epistle, as "being made partakers of the Divine nature." (2 Peter i. 4.)

The first Epistle of John calls it a "passing from death to life." (1 John iii. 14.)

All these expressions come to the same thing in the end. They are all the same truth, only viewed from different sides; and all have one and the same meaning. They describe a great radical change of heart and nature,—a thorough alteration and transformation of the whole inner man,—a participation in the resurrection life of Christ; or, to borrow the words of the Church of England Catechism, "A death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness."

The following general remarks should be carefully remembered by all who wish to have clear views of Regeneration:—

(*a*) It is a change of heart which is not always given to believers at the same time in their lives. Some are born again when they are infants, and seem, like Jeremiah and John the Baptist, filled with the Holy Ghost even from their mother's womb. Some few are born again in old age. The great majority of true Christians probably are born again after they grow up. A vast multitude of persons, it is to be feared, go down to the grave without having been born again at all.

(*b*) It is a change of heart which does not always begin in the same way in those who go through it after they have grown up. With some, like the Apostle Paul and the jailor at Philippi, it is a sudden and violent

change, attended with much distress of mind. With others, like Lydia of Thyatira, it is more gentle and gradual: their winter becomes spring almost without their knowing how. With some the change is brought about by the Spirit working through afflictions, or providential visitations. With others, and probably the greater number of true Christians, the Word of God preached or written, is the means of effecting it.

(*c*) It is a change which can only be known and discerned by its effects. Its beginnings are a hidden and secret thing. We cannot see them. Our Lord Jesus Christ tells us this most plainly: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John iii. 8.) Would you know if you are regenerate? You must try the question, by examining what you know of the effects of Regeneration. Those effects are always the same. The ways by which true Christians are led, in passing through their great change, are certainly various. But the state of heart and soul into which they are brought at last, is always the same. Ask them what they think of sin, Christ, holiness, the world, the Bible, and prayer, and you will find them all of one mind.

(*d*) It is a change which no man can give to himself, nor yet to another. It would be as reasonable to expect the dead to raise themselves, or to require an artist to give a marble statue life. The sons of God are born

"not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 13.) "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth." (James i. 18.) Sometimes the change is ascribed to God the Father: "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath begotten us again unto a lively hope." (1 Peter i. 3.) Sometimes it is ascribed to God the Son: "the Son quickeneth whom He will." (John iii. 21.) "If ye know that He is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him." (1 John ii. 29.) Sometimes it is ascribed to the Spirit,—and He in fact is the great agent by whom it is always effected: "That which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." (John iii. 6.) But man has no power to work the change. It is something far, far beyond his reach. "The condition of man after the fall of Adam," says the tenth Article of the Church of England, "is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God." No minister on earth can convey grace to any one of his congregation at his discretion. He may preach as truly and faithfully as Paul or Apollos; but God must "give the increase." (1 Corinthians iii. 6.)

(*e*) Finally, the change is one which is absolutely necessary to salvation. Nothing can be more clear and positive than the language addressed by our Lord to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." (John iii. 3, 7.)

The reason of this necessity is the exceeding sinfulness and corruption of our natural hearts. The words of St. Paul to the Corinthians are literally accurate: "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him." (1 Cor ii. 14.) Just as rivers flow downward, and sparks fly upward, and stones fall to the ground, so does a man's heart naturally incline to what is evil. We love our soul's enemies,—we dislike our soul's friends. We call good evil, and we call evil good. We take pleasure in ungodliness, we take no pleasure in Christ. We not only commit sin, but we also love sin. We not only need to be cleansed from the guilt of sin, but we also need to be delivered from its power. The natural tone, bias, and current of our minds must be completely altered. The image of God, which sin has blotted out, must be restored. The disorder and confusion which reigns within us must be put down. The first things must no longer be last, and the last first. The Spirit must let in the light on our hearts, put everything in its right place, and create all things new.

It ought always to be remembered that there are two distinct things which the Lord Jesus Christ does for every sinner whom He undertakes to save. He washes him from his sins in His own blood, and gives him a free pardon:—this is his justification. He puts the Holy Spirit into his heart, and makes him an entirely new man:—this is his Regeneration.

The two things are both absolutely necessary to

salvation. The change of heart is as necessary as the pardon: and the pardon is as necessary as the change. Without the pardon we have no right or title to heaven; without the change we should not be meet and ready to enjoy heaven, even if we got there.

The two things are never separate. They are never found apart. Every justified man is also a regenerate man, and every regenerate man is also a justified man. When the Lord Jesus Christ gives a man remission of sins, He also gives him repentance. When He grants peace with God, He also grants power to become a son of God. There are two great standing maxims of the glorious Gospel, which ought never to be forgotten. One is: "He that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16.) The other is: "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Rom. viii. 9.)

A question of great importance remains now to be considered. Are there any signs or evidences by which the work of Regeneration in a man may be discerned? Can we know a regenerate person by any distinctive characteristics? The New Testament appears to me to give an affirmative answer to this question in the first Epistle general of St. John. There we shall find written for our learning what the regenerate man is, and what the regenerate man does,—his ways, his habits, his manner of life, his faith, his experience. Every one who wishes to possess the key to a right understanding of this subject should thoroughly study this first Epistle of St. John.

1. First of all, St. John says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;" and again, "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not." (1 John iii. 9; v. 18.)

A regenerate man does not commit sin as a habit. He no longer sins with his heart and will, and whole inclination, as an unregenerate man does. There was probably a time when he did not think whether his actions were sinful or not, and never felt grieved after doing evil. There was no quarrel between him and sin;—they were friends. Now he hates sin, flees from it, fights against it, counts it his greatest plague, groans under the burden of its presence, mourns when he falls under its influence, and longs to be delivered from it altogether.[a]

2. Secondly, St. John says, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God." (1 John v. 1.)

A regenerate man believes that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour by whom his soul can be pardoned and redeemed, that He is the divine person appointed and anointed by God the Father for this very purpose, and that beside Him there is no Saviour at all. In himself

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[a] "The interpretation of this place (1 John iii. 9) that I judge to be the most natural and unforced is this: 'He that is born of God doth not commit sin;' that is, he doth not sin in that malignant manner in which the children of the devil do: he doth not make a trade of sin, nor live in the constant and allowed practice of it. There is a great difference betwixt regenerate and unregenerate persons in the very sins that they commit. All indeed sin; but a child of God cannot sin,—that is, though he doth sin, yet he cannot sin after such a manner as wicked and unregenerate men do."—*Bishop Hopkins.* 1670.

he sees nothing but unworthiness, but in Christ he sees ground for the fullest confidence, and trusting in Him he believes that his sins are all forgiven and his iniquities all put away. He believes that for the sake of Christ's finished work and death upon the cross he is reckoned righteous in God's sight, and may look forward to death and judgment without fear.

3. Thirdly, St. John says, "Every one that doeth righteousness is born of God." (1 John ii. 29.)

The regenerate man is a holy man. He endeavours to live according to God's will, to do the things that please God, to avoid the things that God hates. His aim and desire is to love God with heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and to love his neighbour as himself. His wish is to be continually looking to Christ as his example as well as his Saviour, and to show himself Christ's friend by doing whatsoever Christ commands.

4. Fourthly, St. John says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (1 John iii. 14.)

A regenerate man has a special love for all true disciples of Christ. Like his Father in heaven he loves all men with a great general love, but he has a special love for them who are of one mind with himself. Like his Lord and Saviour, he loves the worst of sinners, and could weep over them; but he has a peculiar love for those who are believers. He is never so much at home as when he is in their company. He is never so

happy as when he is among the saints and the excellent of the earth. Others may value learning or cleverness, or agreeableness, or riches, or rank, in the society they choose. The regenerate man values grace. Those who have most grace, and are most like Christ, are those he most loves.

5. Fifthly, St. John says, "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." (1 John v. 4.)

A regenerate man does not make the world's opinion his rule of right and wrong. He does not mind going against the stream of the world's ways, notions and customs. "What will men say?" is no longer a turning point with him. He overcomes the love of the world. He finds no pleasure in things which most around him call happiness. He cannot enjoy their enjoyments:—they weary him: they appear to him vain, unprofitable, and unworthy of an immortal being. He overcomes the fear of the world. He is content to do many things which all around him think unnecessary, to say the least. They blame him: it does not move him. They ridicule him: he does not give way. He loves the praise of God more than the praise of man.

6. Sixthly, St. John says, "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself." (1 John v. 18.)

A regenerate man is very careful of his own soul. He endeavours not only to keep clear of sin, but also to keep clear of every thing which may lead to it. He is careful about the company he keeps. He feels that evil communications corrupt the heart, and that evil is

far more catching than good, just as disease is more infectious than health.—He is careful about the employment of his time: his chief desire about it is to spend it profitably.—He is careful about the books he reads: he fears getting his mind poisoned by mischievous writings.—He is careful about the friendship he forms: it is not enough for him that people are kind and amiable and good natured: all this is very well; but will they do good to his soul?—He is careful over his own daily habits and behaviour: he tries to recollect that his own heart is deceitful, and that the world is full of wickedness, that the devil is always labouring to do him harm, and therefore he would fain be always on his guard.

Such are the six great marks of Regeneration, which God has given for our learning. Let every one who has gone so far with me, read them over with attention, and lay them to heart. I believe they were written with a view to settle the great question of the present day, and intended to prevent disputes. Once more then I ask the reader to mark and consider them.

I know there is a vast difference in the depth and distinctness of these marks among those who are regenerate. In some people they are faint, dim, feeble, and hardly to be discerned. You almost need a microscope to make them out. In others they are bold, sharp, clear, plain, and unmistakable, so that he who runs may read them. Some of these marks are more visible in some people, and others are more visible in others.

It seldom happens that all are equally manifest in one and the same soul. All this I am quite ready to allow.

But still, after every allowance, here we find boldly painted the six marks of being born of God. Here are certain positive things laid down by St. John as parts of the regenerate man's character, as plainly and distinctly as the features of a man's face. Here is an inspired Apostle writing one of the last general Epistles to the Church of Christ, telling us that a man born of God does not commit sin,—believes that Jesus is the Christ,—doeth righteousness,—loves the brethren,—overcomes the world, and keepeth himself. And more than once in the very same epistle when these marks are mentioned, the Apostle tells us that who has not this or that mark is "not of God." I ask the reader to observe all this.

What shall we say to these things? What they can say who hold that Regeneration is only an admission to outward Church privileges, I am sure I do not know. For myself I say boldly, I can only come to one conclusion. That conclusion is, that those persons only are regenerate who have these six marks about them, and that all men and women who have not these marks, are not regenerate, are not born again. And I firmly believe that this is the conclusion to which the Apostle wished us to come.

Now the views I have set forth in this paper are notoriously not the views of a large body of English Churchmen. I admit that without hesitation. Thou-

sands of zealous and able clergymen maintain stoutly that Regeneration is inseparable from baptism, and that every baptized person is a "regenerate" person. A few brief remarks on this sorrowful and thorny department of the subject shall conclude this paper.

(1) Some tell us that Regeneration means nothing more than a change of state, not of heart, and an admission to ecclesiastical privileges. They say that there is a wide distinction between Regeneration and conversion, and that a man may actually be "regenerate," and yet not be "born again." [b]

To all this I have one simple reply, and that is, I can find no such Regeneration spoken of anywhere in the Bible. A Regeneration which only means admission into a state of ecclesiastical privilege may be ancient and primitive, for anything I know. But something more than this is wanted. A few plain texts of Scripture are needed, such as would convince any plain reader of the Bible; and these texts have yet to be found.

Such a notion of Regeneration is utterly inconsistent with that which St. John gives us in his first Epistle.

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[b] For instance, Bishop Davenant and Bishop Hopkins frequently speak of a "sacramental regeneration," when they are handling the subject of baptism, as a thing entirely distinct from spiritual regeneration. The general tenor of their writings is to speak of the godly as "regenerate," and the ungodly as the "unregenerate." But with every feeling of respect for two such good men, the question yet remains,—What Scripture warrant have we for saying there are two regenerations? I answer unhesitatingly,—We have none at all.

It renders it necessary to invent the awkward theory that there are two regenerations, and is thus eminently calculated to confuse the minds of unlearned people, and introduce false doctrine. It is a notion which seems utterly inconsistent with the solemnity with which our Lord introduces the subject to Nicodemus. When He said, "Verily, verily, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," did He only mean "except a man be admitted to a state of ecclesiastical privilege?" Surely He meant more than this! Such a Regeneration a man might have, like Simon Magus, and yet never be saved. Such a Regeneration he might never have, like the penitent thief, and yet see the kingdom of God. Surely He must have meant a change of heart. As to the notion that there is any distinction between being "regenerate" and being "born again," it is one which, as we have seen already, will not bear examination. If Greek words mean anything, and are to be rationally interpreted, the two expressions mean one and the same thing.[c]

(2) Some tell us that Regeneration is a real and actual infusion of grace into the heart, which always takes place at baptism, and that it is plainly taught in the Baptismal Service of the Church of England.

My answer to the advocates of this view is short and simple. There is an utter absence of Scriptural proof

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[c] "The mixture of those things by speech, which by nature are divided, is the mother of all error."—*Hooker.* 1595.

that baptism always confers Regeneration, or new birth, and the assertion that it does is pure presumption. The Baptismal Service of the Prayer-book is drawn up on the same great principle which runs throughout all the formularies of our Church,—the principle of *charitable supposition*,—the principle of assuming that people who use the forms of the Church use them with a right heart, and are in *reality* what they appear in *profession*. But the language of the Baptismal Service no more proves that all infants are actually and really regenerated, than the language of the Catechism proves that all children who are taught to say it are actually and really "sanctified" and "elect." Those who have never studied this subject would do well to read Dean Goode's work on the "Effects of Infant Baptism," and the two volumes of the present Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, Dr. Mozley, on "Baptismal Regeneration" and the "Baptismal Controversy."[d]

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[d] The following quotations show that there is nothing new in the theory here propounded :—

"All that receive baptism are called children of God, regenerate, justified: for to us they must be taken for such in charity, until they show themselves other. But the author (Montague, a friend of Archbishop Laud) affirmeth that this is not left to men's charity, as you, saith he, do inform the world, because we are taught in the service-book of our Church earnestly to believe that Christ hath favourably received these infants that are baptized, that He hath embraced them with the arms of His mercy, that He hath given them the blessing of everlasting life; and out of that belief and persuasion we are to give thanks faithfully and devoutly for it. All this we receive and make no doubt of it; but when we have said all we must come to this, that all this is the charity of the

(3) Some people think that infants must be regenerated in baptism, because they put no bar in the way of grace, and must therefore receive the sacrament worthily. Once more I am obliged to say, there is an utter absence of Scripture in defence of this view. The right of Christian infants to baptism is only through their parents. To tell us that it makes no difference whether the parents are prayerful, believing, and godly people, or prayerless, godless, and ignorant, and that all infants alike are in baptism regenerated, is to my mind revolting, and seems to turn Christ's ordinance into a mere form.

Church, and what more can you make of it?"—*George Carleton, Bishop of Chichester.* 1619.

"We are to distinguish between the judgment of charity and the judgment of certainty; for although in the general we know that not every one that is baptized is justified or shall be saved, yet when we come to particulars, we are to judge of them that are baptized that they are regenerated and justified, and shall be saved, until they shall discover themselves not to be such. And so our Book of Common Prayer speaketh of them."—*George Downame, Bishop of Derry.* 1620.

"The office for baptizing infants carries on the supposition of an internal Regeneration."—*Bishop Burnet.* 1689.

"There is justification for that prayer in our public Liturgy, when the congregation gives thanks to God for the child baptized, that it hath pleased Him to regenerate this infant by His Holy Spirit, etc.; for it cannot be denied but that the holy ordinance of baptism, the seal of our sanctification, doth take effect many times immediately in the infusion of present grace into the infant's soul, though many times also it hath not its effect till many years after. But seeing it is questionably true in many, we may and must charitably suppose it in every one, for when we come to particulars whom dare we exclude? And this we may do without tying the grace of Regeneration necessarily to baptism, as some complain that we do."—*William Pemble, Magdalen Hall, Oxford.* 1635.

Add to this the fact that the precise effect of baptism on infants is never once stated in the New Testament. There is no description of a child's baptism; and to say that children, born in sin, as all are, are in themselves *worthy* to receive grace, appears to me a near approach to the old heresy of Pelagianism.[e]

(4) Some maintain that all baptized persons, without exception, are regenerated and receive grace in baptism, but that the grace in many lies dormant, like a seed,

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"The Apostles always, when they descend to particular men or Churches, PRESUME every Christian to be elect, sanctified, justified, and in the way of being glorified, until he himself shall have proved himself to be wicked, or an apostate."—*Bishop Davenant.* 1627.

"As to what he says, that no one can be a minister of the Church of England, who is not certainly persuaded of the Regeneration of every infant baptized, neither also is that true. The minister truly gives God thanks after each infant has been baptized, that it has pleased God to regenerate him with His Holy Spirit. But it does not then follow that he ought to be certain of the Regeneration of every infant baptized; for it is sufficient, if he is persuaded of the Regeneration of some only,—for instance, of elect infants, or if you like, even of some only of their number, that on that account he may be able, nay ought, to give God thanks for each and all baptized. Since who is elect he knows not: and it is but just that he should *by the judgment of charity presume*, that as many as he baptizes are elect,—and if any are regenerated in baptism (which none but a Socinian or other Catabaptist will deny) regenerated."—*Dr. Durel, Dean of Windsor, and Chaplain to the King.* 1677.

[e] "The Papists maintain that grace is conferred upon little children in the sacraments of the New Testament, without faith or any good motive. This is to attribute a power to sacraments of themselves, and by a virtue of their own, in the case of little children: which we say is false. For we assert that grace is not conferred by the sacraments even upon little children from the work wrought, so that all necessarily have grace that receive the sacraments."—*Dr. Whitaker.* 1580.

and produces no effect. My reply is, that Scripture never speaks of regenerating grace as a thing that can lie dormant. On the contrary, St. John says expressly of the man born of God, that "his seed remaineth in him, and *he cannot sin because he is born of God.*" (1 John iii. 9.) As for the famous text, "Stir up the gift that is in thee" (2 Tim. i. 6), which is often addressed to baptized people as peculiarly applicable, a single glance at the passage will show that it belongs exclusively to a minister, refers specially to ordination, and has no reference whatever to anything imparted in baptism.

One thing, at all events, is abundantly clear to my own mind: not one single text can be pointed out in the New Testament which clearly, distinctly, and conclusively asserts that all who are baptized are, as a matter of course, regenerated at their baptism. Nothing is more common than to see the famous verse, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John iii. 5), brought forward as a proof of invariable baptismal regeneration. But how any reflecting, sensible man can bring it forward for such a purpose, is truly astonishing. The text no doubt asserts the absolute *necessity* of being "born of water and the Spirit," if we would be saved, and excludes from salvation all who are not so born. But the text most certainly does not assert that *every one* who is baptized is also at the same time born of water and the Spirit, or that baptism is the only means by which

Regeneration, or new birth, is conferred. As to the often-quoted text, "baptism doth also save us," the context alone is directly against the theory of invariable baptismal regeneration. St. Peter distinctly says that the baptism which saves is not the mere "putting away the filth of the flesh" (that is the mere outward use of water), "but the answer of a good conscience." (1 Pet. iii. 21.) Where this is wanting baptism does no good.

After all I am well aware that many think it makes no difference whether we think all baptized persons are regenerate or not. They tell us it all comes to the same thing in the long run. I cannot say so. To my humble apprehension it seems to make an immense difference. If I tell a man that he has grace in his heart, and only needs to "stir up a gift" already within him, it is one thing. If I tell him that he is dead in sins, and must be born again, it is quite another. The moral effect of the two messages must, on the very face of it, be widely different. The one, I contend, is calculated by God's blessing, to awaken the sinner. The other, I contend, is calculated to lull him to sleep.—The one, I maintain, is likely to feed sloth, check self-examination, and encourage an easy self-satisfied state of soul: he has got some grace within him whenever he likes to use it,—why should he be in a hurry, why be afraid?—The other, I maintain, is likely to rouse convictions, drive him to self-inquiry, and frighten him out of his dangerous security: he has nothing within him to rest upon,—he must find a refuge and remedy,—he is lost

and perishing,—what must he do to be saved?—The one message, I affirm, is likely to keep men natural men, the other to make them spiritual men,—the one to have no effect upon the conscience, the other to lead to Christ. Let men say what they will, I, for one, dare not say I think it all comes to the same thing.

To my own mind there is only one sure evidence, according to Scripture, of any one being a regenerate person. That evidence is the fruit that he brings forth in his heart and life. "Every tree is known by his own fruit." Those fruits are described clearly and plainly in the New Testament. The favourite and common theory that people may possess the gift of the Spirit and the grace of Regeneration, when neither the gift nor the grace can be seen, appears to me dangerous in the highest degree. The safest line to adopt, in my judgment, is to tell men that where no grace can be seen no grace is possessed, and that he only is "regenerate" who has the Bible marks of Regeneration. To assert, as thousands of well-meaning and zealous clergymen do, that all baptized persons are regenerated, appears to me to degrade the blessed sacrament of baptism into a mere form, and to dishonour the great doctrine of spiritual Regeneration. A "regenerate" Churchman and an "unregenerate" Churchman, according to my reading of Scripture, are two entirely different persons; and the difference between them is one that must and will be seen. A Regeneration that cannot be seen is worthless.

Sanctification.

BY THE

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VI.

SANCTIFICATION.

IN heaven they cry for ever, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;" and a voice comes out of the throne, "Be ye holy, for I am holy:" and there are answers from the earth of the High Priest of the Church, saying, "Sanctify them through Thy truth;" and of men praying for themselves, "Sanctify us wholly in body, soul, and spirit;" and charging one another to "follow after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

Sanctification is presented in the Word of God as the commandment of the Lord, and the promise of the Father; as the universal necessity, and the aim of human life; as the crown of all religion, and the end of the Divine teaching; as the effect of the atoning blood, and the work of the Spirit of grace; as the mark set upon the elect, and the earnest of their future glory.

On a subject which thus connects itself with all the mysteries of truth, and covers the whole field of religious

thought, what can be done in the compass of a short paper? Very little certainly. But if we follow the development of the doctrine step by step, till we see it in its full Evangelical maturity, we shall take the method most likely to contribute to just apprehensions of it, and to guard against partial views.

The idea which the word represents is common to all religious thought, however ignorant or corrupt. Some rudimentary or perverted form of it appears in Brahminical and Fetish superstitions, in unaccountable distinctions between things holy and profane, in acts supposed to sanctify and persons supposed to be sanctified. The spirit of man, blinded and bewildered, bears testimony to a truth which it disfigures and destroys. What that truth is the Word of God must teach. It does so on its own plan of gradation. Through typical representation in the Old Testament, and spiritual expositions in the New, the truth of the matter is elucidated, and placed before us in the light of heaven.

The Sanctifications of the Old Testament have an apparently external character, as created by some performance or decree. Israel is sanctified as a people, and the congregation on particular occasions. The firstborn, Aaron and his sons, men preparing for acts of worship or service to God, holy place and sabbath-day, tabernacle and altar, vessels and implements, are "sanctified" by ceremonies, prescribed or understood, by temporary or permanent severance from common acts and uses. The idea, thus shaped for future use, appears to be that of

separation for God, appropriation to His use, qualification for approach to Him, meetness for relations with Him. The washings, sprinklings, anointings, sacrificings, abstinences, and retirements, by which these sanctifications were effected, plainly signified that the common state and habit was disqualified for close relations with the Lord. I say the *common* state and habit; for sanctification was more than purification,—the one being a relief from *special* uncleanness, the other an elimination from the *general* uncleanness, as shown in the terms employed; as, for instance, in the familiar expression, "that which is *common* and unclean."

But if the Old Testament sanctifications were thus ceremonial, and in the region of the flesh, wherein lay their power to educate men to the true idea of Sanctification? How did they differ from heathen ordinances, which also proposed to separate persons and things for special relation to the Divine? What created the fragrance of real sanctity which perceptibly breathes from the one, as contrasted with the odour of corruption which the others frequently exhale? Was it that the ordinances themselves were more pure and more significant of purity? There is something in that, but not much: the secret lies in the character of the God to whom they have respect. Separate men, by any ordinances you please, to relations with a God who is thought of as an unknown Power with no moral personality, or as a Being swayed by human principles and passions, and on the same moral level as ourselves,

and you will have, as in heathen religions generally, sanctifications which do not sanctify, and even holiness which is distinctly unholy. It is quite otherwise when the God to whom your ordinances have respect is known as "the living God," a "righteous Lord, who loveth righteousness, and whose countenance will behold the thing that is just,"—who is the ideal of a transcendent moral goodness, and by saying, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," demands that we rise towards it. Then, as in the Jewish system, Sanctifications in figure and in the flesh obtain a living connection with Sanctification in spirit and in truth, tending to an ever-increasing distinctness; as in the mouth of Prophets and Psalmists the language of ceremonies becomes the language of the conscience and the soul.

The result of the Old Testament teaching may be stated thus:—

(1) Sanctification is a separation, from the common state of man's nature and habit, for special relations with God.

(2) It is not self-invented or self-obtained, but only found under the provisions and according to the methods of a Divine call and covenant.

(3) It's true realization is in the moral being of man, by communion with, and assimilation to, the mind of God.

Here were the outlines which the New Testament was to fill up, by the discovery of the conditions, powers,

and methods for accomplishing this Sanctification, which were provided of God in Christ.

The transitional word is uttered by the Lord in His "high priestly prayer," at the moment when He finishes the work which was given Him to do. "Sanctify them in Thy truth;" "Thy Word is truth;" "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth." A glance at a Concordance will show how transitional these words are, by the different tone of the passages in which "sanctification" and its cognate words occur in the preceding and in the succeeding Scriptures. Henceforth it is Sanctification *in truth:* figures and types have dropped away; the realities of spirit and of conscience alone remain. It is Sanctification *in Christ:* all the conditions for it are accomplished by Him; all the provisions for it are found in Him; all the powers for it proceed from Him. It is Sanctification *by the Word:* the revelation of the truth, the expression of the mind of God to our minds, making appeal to all that is within us, and educing holiness from faith. Thus guided, we will first observe the source, and then trace the course of Christian Sanctification.

Its source is in the sanctification of Christ. Twice is the Word used of His history: once of His mission from God,—"whom the Father has sanctified and sent into the world" (John x. 36); once of His own fulfilment of that mission,—"I sanctify myself." (John xvii. 19.) In neither place can the expression intend any attainment or increase of personal holiness. In

both it plainly represents that fundamental idea of the word which we derive from the Old Testament,—separation to God in special relation or for special service. That relation was here that of the Son of God incarnate; that service was the whole work of redemption. "I sanctify myself" thus imports, "I separate and yield myself to the Father's will and use, in the voluntary consecration of my life and sacrifice of my death, and in the subsequent resumption of human life sanctified to God for ever by that act of atonement: and this I do for them (*ὑπὲρ ἀυτῶν*), for their sakes, in order that they may be sanctified in truth." The sanctification of Christ is thus asserted to be the cause of the sanctification of His people (for *ἵνα* has here its full telic force), and this not in any secondary or partial sense; for the employment of the auxiliary verb with the perfect participle (*ἵνα ὦσιν ἡγιασμένοι*) describes the Sanctification as hereby already effected for, and actually possessed by, those who are in Him.

The transmission or communication of this Sanctification which originally exists only in the human nature of Christ, to those who derive it from Him, is the next thing to be considered.

The fundamental condition of this communication is the participation of the same nature,—the blood relationship and community of stock; according as it is written, "He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one." (Heb. ii. 11.) In virtue of this a kind of remote or potential Sanctification may be considered

as attaching to the whole human race, who are His brethren according to the flesh, and for whose sins His sacrifice was offered,—"Not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 2.)

The next step of approach to the state which we seek carries us from the race of mankind into the visible Church of Christ. Here the connection with Him is of another kind than that of the common nature. It has the character of a covenant, and involves a certain amount of intelligence and consent. The right to this covenant is confessed and accepted in Sacraments ordained for the purpose; the truth of it is taught in the proclamation of the word, and affirmed by confessions of faith; the possession of it is assumed by participation in Christian ordinances, and, as far as it appears to be duly claimed, is imputed in the judgment of charity. Every measure of connection with Christ sanctifies as far as it extends. St. Paul even asserts a communication of (so to speak) a kind of preliminary or derived Sanctification, through Christian persons, to those whose lives were united with their own: "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." (1 Cor. vii. 14.) The line of division of holy and unclean thus drawn between the Church and those that were without, is plainly the continuation under the new dispensation of that which, under the old, had separated Israel to be "a holy nation" as compared with the

Gentile world. The sanctity was there, and is here, one of outward calling and privilege and obligation and admitted covenant-position. In this sense the title of "the holy," or "the saints," was used to designate the members of the Christian Church, not importing any discriminating certificate of personal character, or judgment on the truthfulness of individual profession. No such discrimination can be thought of, when St. Peter is said to have "gone down to the saints which dwelt at Lydda," or St. Paul to have made collections "for the poor saints at Jerusalem," or in a multitude of other cases where the customary title occurs; though certainly its use was a perpetual witness and claim for the reality of inward dedication to God in Christ, which alone is "Sanctification in truth."

Into this region of "sanctification in truth" it is now time to advance. We have passed from the race of mankind into the visible Church; we now pass from the visible Church into the inner circle of true believers, round which it belongs to God and not to man to draw the unseen line of demarcation. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." We cannot number them, but we perceive that the crowd has dwindled, like Gideon's host, and that only a little flock remains. In them "Sanctification of the Spirit" attends "belief of the truth," and it is the mark of their election and their seal to life eternal.

In approaching this subject the first principle is clear. It has been already affirmed. Sanctification is in

Christ: in its origin and progress,—in all its parts and aspects. If a natural relation to Him involves a potential sanctity for men, if a covenant relation to Him involves a preliminary and obligatory sanctity for the Church, a true and spiritual relation to Him involves a true and spiritual sanctity for the believer,—a sanctity which must consist in separation and appropriation to God both in will and deed, and qualification for His communion and service by purification from all uncleanness both of flesh and spirit.

Before proceeding farther, it might here have been necessary to clear this result of participation in Christ from its very common confusion with another, which must be separated from it in thought, though it is not separate in fact: but the subject of Justification has been treated in a former paper, and the question which would now be raised has been disposed of. It is enough to say that it *must* be disposed of, in every mind which would preserve itself from seeking peace and pursuing holiness on a principle fundamentally false. We are not justified by our Sanctification, as Rome has taught. Indeed, the faith of justification by the work of Christ for us is an elementary condition of Sanctification by His work in us, by terminating anxiety and fear, by reconciling the heart to God, and opening it to the Spirit of adoption.

Yet neither are we sanctified by our justification, as some (otherwise Evangelical teaching) may seem to suggest, by making the one gift scarcely more than a

conscious enjoyment of the other. They are not two names for the same thing, nor are they the effect either of the other, but both of them the result of a living union with Jesus Christ. "He of God is made unto us righteousness and sanctification,"—gifts as separate as are the "wisdom" and "redemption" with which they are joined (1 Cor. i. 30), and meeting two different necessities of our state: namely, the guilt which Divine justice condemns, and the uncleanness which Divine purity abhors.

I am now concerned only with this last necessity, or rather with the provision which God has made for it, as presented to us in His Word.

To apprehend this teaching aright, I think a distinction must be made between (what I will call) a Sanctification of state and a Sanctification of character. We find in fact two classes of texts which seem to present the subject in the two different points of view,—the one speaking of Sanctification as if completed, and simply bestowed; the other, as if in progress, and still to be sought: the one connecting it chiefly with the death and sacrifice of Christ; the other with the effluence of His life and spirit.

To the one class belong such passages as these, in the Epistle to the Hebrews:—

"By the which will we *are sanctified* through the offerings of the body of Jesus Christ once for all,"—ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμὲν οἱ διὰ τῆς.—κ. τ. λ. (x. 10.) "By one offering He hath *perfected for ever* them that are sanctified,"—τετελείωκεν—

τοὺς ἁγιαζομένους.[a] (x. 14.) "The wilful sinner has counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he *was* sanctified, an unholy thing,"—ἐν ᾧ ἡγιάσθη. (x. 29.) "That He might sanctify the people with His own blood, He suffered," etc. (xiii. 12.)

Such words cannot naturally be referred to sanctification of character,—to changes of mind, heart, and life, wrought by the renewing work of Christ. They speak of a state or standing, created by the *sacerdotal* work of Christ, in which the moral sanctification will be carried on, but which is not identical with it. It seems therefore that we must distinguish the idea of the sanctification of state from that of the sanctification of character,—a distinction of importance for avoiding mistaken inferences; since words, which assert a *perfected* sanctification in the one sense, do not in the least imply it in the other.

In the Old Testament we observed the same distinction between a sanctification of state in relation to God, created by covenant ordinances, and a sanctification of moral change, arising from that relation as existing with a God who is holy. The Epistle to the Hebrews developes the Christian parallel; in which the death, the offering, and the blood of Christ are correspondent

[a] The perfect participle in v. 10 is exchanged for the present in v. 14. Does this intend the continuity of the work in the individual or its continuity in the Church? I think the latter; and that "those who are being sanctified" means those who in succession, as time goes on, are sanctified: the Sanctification which they receive being itself regarded as τετελειωμένη.

to the old sacrificial ordinances in respect of their purifying power: and the believer is represented as thereby absolutely relieved from the disqualifying effects of his natural uncleanness, and his purification for the service of God as perfected; so that he has, or ought to have, a "purged conscience," or the consciousness of a sanctified state. The man who was yesterday in his sins, if to-day he be in Christ "believing and being baptized," is the rightful possessor of this consciousness; and is *in this sense* ἅγιος ("holy," or a "saint"), though he may be yet a most imperfect specimen of Christian character: for this state is constituted by his participation in the eternal sacrifice; and the recognition of it is therefore antecedent to all consideration of the sanctification of character, life, and conversation.

But this consideration immediately presents itself, and to it I must now proceed. I speak of the effect of our sanctification of state, and of our relation to God in Christ upon the thoughts and affections, principles and motives, conduct and conversation, habits of mind and habits of life,—in a word, on the whole moral being. It is this which is generally intended when we speak of Sanctification; and justly, for all that has been already spoken of is but the condition and qualification for this. This is Sanctification actual and inherent, which is "the will of God," which is "Christ living in us," the operation of the Holy Ghost, the effect of the Word of truth, the seal of election, and that "without which no man shall see the Lord."

We saw that in the old covenant the relation to God by calling and ordinance became a moral power, telling on men's conscience, heart, and life, by virtue of the revealed character of the God with whom they had to do. In the new covenant the relation to God in Christ is followed by the same effects, on a scale proportioned to the fuller revelation of the Father through the Son. The ideal of Christian holiness is a great advance on that which was known to "them of old time," as its introductory exposition in the Sermon on the Mount assumes. The standard is not only higher, but more complete; for there was something rugged and fragmentary in the holiness of the Old Testament, like a work in outline, strongly marked in some places, faintly touched in others, and left for another hand to finish.

As the instrument of Sanctification in the one dispensation was the Word,—"the lively oracles," the revelation of the mind of God,—so also it is in the other. "Sanctify them in (the power of) Thy truth: *Thy Word* is truth." Still it is the Word: but how changed and perfected! Once the Law, now the Gospel, —the very voice of Eternal Love; in its mysteries more glorious, in its revelation of them more ample and distinct; in its tones more Divine, and yet more human, more persuasive to the affections of the heart, more conversant with its secrets, more responsive to its cries; more potent to determine the form of character and the course of life, because it applies itself to the depth, rather than to the surface of our being, and deals with

the things "by which men live, and in which is the life of their spirit."

The nature of the instrument of Sanctification shows the nature of the work for which it is to be employed. Seeing that the word addresses itself to the understanding, and appeals to the heart, and informs the conscience, and persuades the will, and directs the actions, it is plain that the subject of operation is the entire man, in all the parts of his constitution. It is impossible any longer to think of a sanctification of state which should not become a sanctification of character: the one is seen to be for the sake of the other. It must be so from the nature of the case. Man is not an implement or a chattel: he was made in the likeness of God. He can now be truly appropriated to God again in no other way than by the subjection of his will, and the assimilation of his mind.

If this is taught by the fact that he is sanctified by the Word, it is taught still more plainly by the fact that he is sanctified by the Spirit. In the view of the Apostles, the elevation of the word of the New Testament above that of the Old consists less in its purport than in its power,—the power which attends and employs it, which is the Spirit of Christ and of God. "It is not in the letter, but in the spirit," a spirit which "giveth life." It is "written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God," and therefore "not on tables of stone, but on fleshy tables of the heart." (2 Cor. iii. 3—6.)

It were endless to recite, it were useless to select from,

the testimonies which ascribe our Sanctification, in its origin and progress, and in all its constituent parts, to "the Holy Ghost, which dwelleth in us." It was the promise of the Lord: "He dwelleth with you, and shall be *in* you;" and the Epistles attest the conscious certainty of its fulfilment. There believers are in Christ (that is, their sanctification of state), and Christ in them (that is, their sanctification of character). It is a familiar admitted truth,—"*What! know ye not* that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobate?" (2 Cor. xiii. 5.) And this is not an imputed or a dormant presence: "Christ *liveth*" in them by the Spirit which He has given them, itself His true life in their souls. As the death of Jesus was the condition of His glorified life, so the Sanctification ascribed to His death is but the condition of that which is derived from His life. This is not a Sanctification already finished and perfected, but one perpetually active, according to the nature of life. How various are the activities attributed to the Spirit of life! He convinces, teaches, shows the things of Christ, guides into all truth, strengthens, comforts, helps infirmities, intercedes within us, witnesses with our spirits, strives against the flesh, mortifies the deeds of the body, purifies the soul in obeying the truth, makes to abound in hope, sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts. No part of this intricate nature, of this busy world of thought, of this ever varying life, is shut against His penetrating power, or excepted from His holy operations in the Sanctification of men in spirit and in truth.

Thus sanctifying righteousness is wrought; but what is it in itself?

"That," says Hooker, "wherein it consisteth, whereof it is really and formally made, are those infused virtues proper and particular unto saints, which the Spirit, in that very moment when first it is given of God, bringeth with it. The effects thereof are such actions as the Apostle calleth the fruits, the works, the operations of the Spirit; the difference of which operations from the root whereof they spring, maketh it needful to put two kinds likewise of sanctifying righteousness, ***habitual*** and ***actual.***" ("Discourse on Justification," sect. 21.)

The essence of holiness is shown to lie not in the acts, but in the "habits" which produce them, and are strengthened by them: *i.e.*, in the permanent dispositions and inclinations of the mind. Owen, using the same terms, adds the remark:—

"I call this principle of holiness a habit; not as though it were absolutely of the same kind with acquired habits, but because in its effects and manner of operation it agreeth in sundry things with intellectual and moral habit. But it hath much more conformity unto a natural unchangeable ***instinct***, than unto any acquired habit." (Discourse on the Holy Spirit," b. iv., sect. 9.)

But what is that which differences these habits from others, in regard, not to their origin, but their character? In other words, what is holiness? In itself, and as an attribute of God, it is beyond definition. We describe it by negations and metaphors. "I do confess" (to use the words of the author just quoted) "it is but little that I can comprehend. It is a matter much spoken of,

but the essence and true nature of it are much hidden from the eyes of living men. As we are not in this life perfect in the duties of holiness, no more are we in the knowledge of its nature."

We know, however, that in ascribing holiness to God, as distinguished from other attributes of power, wisdom, etc., we are regarding Him in that aspect which corresponds to our own *moral* nature; and holiness for man must therefore consist in moral assimilation to God, of which the originating powers are consecration of the will and attraction of the affections: in other words, obedience and love. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," "Yield yourselves unto God," are commands which involve all goodness, righteousness, and truth, because He who is loved, and to whom we yield ourselves, is essential goodness, righteousuess, and truth. "This is *the message*," the foundation truth on which everything depends,— "That God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." (1 John i. 5.) Devotion to God, unless He were thus regarded, would not be holiness. Entire consecration to a God falsely conceived of (as in heathen or Mohammedan ideas), might produce a character the reverse of holy; and in all Christian misconceptions a proportionate loss of sanctifying influence must follow. Neither, on the other hand, can holiness arise from devotion to righteousness and truth, as mere principles, because an abstract principle is not a quickening spirit, and also because the first dictate of righteousness and truth is violated in disowning "the living God." Hence those who urge

virtue on its own account, cannot rise to the idea of holiness, and seldom use the word. From these observations it results that we comprehend in the idea of holiness both that of a spiritual principle and that of a moral field of action: it represents moral life as moulded by the spiritual power. This is "the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth."

We call the power spiritual because it lies in the Spirit; that side of our nature, so to speak, which has contact with God, who is a Spirit, and the Father of spirits, and which is quickened into life by the Spirit of His Son. And this Divine Agent works, in accordance with our mental constitution, by principles and affections and motives which constitute the "spiritual mind:" such as the fear of God, the love of God, the desire to please or to honour Him; the love of Jesus, the delight in His example, the longing to be conformed to His likeness; the reckoning oneself dead and risen with Him; the sense of the purpose of redemption, and of what is becoming to the Gospel of Christ; the anticipation of things to come, of the account soon to be given, and of the salvation ready to be revealed; the consciousness of a spiritual world around us; the reverence for the Holy Word as the rule of life; the intuitive perceptions, the disinterested affections, the instinctive compassions, which attend the true knowledge of the God of love. These, and such as these, are the principles by which the Holy Ghost sanctifies the elect people of God.

He does so by bringing them to bear on the whole moral life in its practical course; and herein lies the line of distinction between the imagination and the reality of a spiritual mind. *Hereby* we know that we are *of the truth*," when these motive powers show themselves, "not in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth." (1 John iii. 18, 19.) Nothing need be said here of distinct doctrines (whether called Antinomian or by any other name) which have separated the spiritual from the moral, and made it possible to suppose that a man could be holy who was not good; but there is always cause for anxiety lest the essential and necessary unity of the spiritual and the moral life should be imperfectly understood or inadequately represented. The world is apt to suspect that there is something technical and factitious in Christian holiness, or that somehow its virtues are not the virtues of practical life. Let the voices of the Apostles be heard for ever proclaiming, that "*the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth*" (Eph. v. 9); explaining how the principles of faith beget all virtues which are recognised by the common conscience: truthfulness, justice, purity, integrity, generosity, sobriety, disinterestedness, unselfishness, humility, equity, candour, courage, diligence, usefulness, temperance, patience, meekness, contentment, long-suffering, kindness, charity: testifying also, that "if *these* things be in us and abound, they make us to be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

How ample are the teachings of their wholesome words, —how earnest their entreaties, how keen their reproofs, how weighty their commandments,—as they apply the evangelical motives to the relations and occasions of actual life, and show what manner of persons they will make us to be in all the distinct particulars of holy conversation and godliness!

There is nothing more admirable in Scripture than the firm hold which it maintains on both the spiritual and the moral elements in the sanctification of man. I learn to appreciate this undisturbed balance of mind, when I observe how frequently, in the thoughts and writings of men, strong attention to one side of the subject is accompanied by a weak impression, or even an uneasy suspicion, on the other. Practical minds seem to suspect a diversion from the realities of duty in expositions of the mysteries of salvation and of the inward processes of the life of faith. Good people, alive about spiritual doctrines and experiences, appear to think that they are no longer on Gospel ground when attention is fixed on the specific virtues or the "good works" on which the Word insists and dilates. There is no saying how far this divergence would actually go but for the admitted authority and habitual use of a book which counteracts the narrow partialities of the spirit of man by the calm comprehensiveness of the Spirit of God.

Another point in which this equilibrium of Scripture is to be noticed, is its combination of the reality of Sanctification with the recognition of the opposing power of sin.

All these Divine instructions either assert or assume that this moral Sanctification is realized through perpetual controversy with an opposing power. The inclinations and movements of the flesh are seen throughout as "contrary" to those of the Spirit: so that the general aspect of Sanctification is that of an active denial of the various forms of evil inherent in our nature. "The putting off the old man" is regarded as done,—perfectly and once for all in intention, but imperfectly and continuously in fact; so that the same persons are spoken of as having done it, and yet needing to be stimulated and assisted in doing it; as being clean, and yet having to cleanse themselves; as dead to sin, and yet busy in mortifying their evil and corrupt affections.

The apparently contradictory statements and inconsistent experiences which result from this condition, create the danger of acquiescence in sin as an inevitable necessity: the danger of reading the seventh chapter of Romans as if it had no sequel; as if the fact, that with "the mind we serve the law of God and with the flesh the law of sin," implied a helpless compromise; as if the other law, which is against the law of the mind, must be allowed a drawn battle and a divided empire. Not so. Sanctification is the rejection of all compromise: it is victory; it is dominion; it is "deliverance from the body of this death;" it is "walking, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" it is "having the fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

Yet (as these very expressions imply) the evil which

is conquered is not *annihilated.* The flesh, the body of sin, the law of sin in the members, are not things of the past, either in their existence, or their activity, or their desert of condemnation. They create the conflict within, and give cause for the renunciations and resistances, the self-condemnations and confessions, by which the renewed will evermore repudiates complicity with indwelling sin. Of this reality of sin in those who are sanctified we have the fullest testimony, in the penitential voices of public liturgies and private devotions, and in the records of the highest Christian consciousness, from the Confessions of Augustine to the Diary of Henry Martyn. The mind of the Church is in entire harmony with the pattern of all prayer which unites the daily entreaty for forgivenes of trespasses with the holiest desires for the glory, the kingdom, and the will of God.

But does not St. Paul pray that God would "sanctify men wholly"? and does not our Lord charge us to "be perfect, even as our Father is perfect"? and does not St. John aver, that "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not"? Would St. Paul implore,—would the Lord command,—would St. John assert,—as the proper state of all Christians, one which is impossible for any? But words are not to be taken without regard to the considerations which interpret them: and no one I suppose would maintain that He who said, "None is good save One," meant that His disciples would be as perfect in goodness as their Father in heaven; or that St. Paul, who did "not count himself to have attained," expected an

absolutely perfect holiness for his converts; or that St. John, who had spoken of those who walk in the light, as "confessing their sins," and said it would be self-deceit and destitution of the truth to say they had none, intended a moment afterwards to affirm that those who are in Christ do not sin in any sense, and have nothing to confess or be forgiven. If these things are obviously *not* meant, there is need of care in determining what *is* meant.

The careful reader will observe that St. John is discriminating by broad strong lines the characters of those who abide in Christ and those who do not, and the "not sinning" in ver. 6 is the condensed form of the fuller expression (4, 7, 8, 9, 10), "not *doing* sin,"—committing, performing, carrying it out in act, or by such voluntary concessions to it as would make a man a doer of sin or lawlessness (*ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν—τὴν ἀνομίαν*) as opposed to a doer of righteousness (*ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην*).

He may observe that the word "perfect" has the same freedom of meaning in Scripture as in common language, importing sometimes the full realization of a thing according to its own nature, sometimes the highest measure of such accomplishment in respect of character or quality. Fruit "brought to perfection" may mean fruit that has become really such, that has not failed in the process of formation; or else fruit that is the very best of its kind, compared with other similar fruit. "A perfect man" may be one whose manhood is complete, as compared with a child or imbecile person; or one whose capacities are developed to the fullest measure, as compared with

the average of other men. Then there will be no difficulty in understanding how the term is applied to men whose defects are sharply noted, or how "they that are perfect" are to be so minded as not to count themselves "perfected." (Phil. iii. 13—15.) It will be further understood that, as elsewhere such words are used relatively to the thing spoken of, and admit of measures and degrees, so in Scripture they suppose the conditions of human nature, and define no exact point of attainment. In exhortation or in prayer they preclude all thought of limitation, or the reservation of any part of inward or outward life, from subjection to the will of God and the action of His Spirit, or the reduction of desires and aims to any point below the highest. But only if that point be reached can such words become the language of conscious attainment. And this is what is denied, by St. Paul for himself, and by the experience of godly men, whose confessions and humiliations have been more genuine and profound, in proportion as the standard which they approached rose ever higher before them.

Attention is now being claimed by a teaching which to the ordinary apprehension seems at variance with these recognised truths.[b] It appears to be a doctrine, not

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[b] I take this representation of it from the pious and fervent pamphlet, "Sanctification through Faith," by R. Pearsall Smith. It is difficult to take an accurate measure of the meaning of emotional language; but it seems to me that while the first direction and general intention of this teaching is useful for the Church, it passes into a form of exaggeration pregnant with future dangers.

of perfection of character, but of practical sinlessness. It is represented that this is assured by the principle, "According to your faith be it unto you." You trust the Lord for full justification, and you have it; trust Him for full sanctification, and you have that too,—a gift of absolute consecration to God, unfailing obedience up to the light you have, and entire purity of heart. Self-condemnation for practical failure, complaints of the power of indwelling sin, and consciousness of inward defilements, are thus become things of the past; and the soul is conscious of the full realization of the "redemption from *all* iniquity," the "purification from *all* uncleanness of flesh and spirit," and the "perfecting of holiness in the fear of God." He who testifies these things feels bound to make confession of this state, as experienced by himself, to the glory of the grace of God; and those who hold these views are spoken of as "claiming to have received a full deliverance from sinning," as the consequence of "ceasing from all self-effort" and "simple abandonment to Christ."

We are not concerned to inquire into a man's personal experience, whether rightly read or not, but into the doctrine which it is alleged to support; and a few words (though they must here be cursory and insufficient) seem demanded by this representation,—first, of the state which faith secures; and secondly, of the faith which secures it.

I. A doctrine of the actual attainment of positive sinlessness, inward as well as outward, can be maintained

only on one of two suppositions: either that the evil tendencies of nature cease to be active; or that their activity, while we refuse to "follow or be led by them," does not involve sin. Neither of these suppositions will square with Scripture, any more than with the Articles of Protestant Churches, or with the recognised consciousness of Christians in general.

With regard to the first, I need hardly repeat that the language of the Epistles supposes a perpetual conflict with a law, presence, and power of sin, which is not only dwelling but working in us; and that its constant activity is everywhere implied in the very various and vivid expressions by which the process of sanctification is there described.

The other supposition is that if the motions of sins which are in our members are so far overcome as no longer "to bring forth fruit unto death," they are to be regarded simply as temptations, not having the nature of sin. It has been long since debated whether the ἐπιθυμια or φρόνημα τῆς σαρκος, the "concupiscence" of the old divines,—for which, however, no satisfactory English word was found,—the entire tendency which lusts against the law of God, was itself to be considered sin. The Tridentine Decree on Original Sin (session 5), and our own 9th Article, both refer to the words of St. Paul in Rom. vii. 7; the one to explain that "it is not truly and properly sin, but is *so called* because it is out of sin and inclines to sin;" the other to assert that "the Apostle doth confess that concupiscence and lust hath of itself the nature of sin."

Common sense must prefer this plain statement of the natural meaning of words to the factitious interpretation suggested by the exigencies of Romish doctrine. But if, as conscience also bears witness, the "indwelling sin" is really *sin*, and, as such, the proper subject of penitent shame, what shall be said of all those practical manifestations of its power, and those real concessions to it, even though at the time unintended and unconscious, in thought, temper, word, and deed, which, to those who are walking in the light, the review of every day discovers? If one man "claims to have received a full deliverance from sinning,"[c] and another cries, "In looking back on every day I see so much vanity, and levity, and pride, and selfishness, that I tremble at the world of iniquity within,"[d] do I conclude that the one state is more holy, more exempt from the deep infection than the other? Of this I can say nothing; but I am sure that we see what we look for, and are conscious of what we attend to: and if deliverance from sin be so interpreted as to exclude its actual presence, I see that an opinion which tends to divert attention from the realities within will prove not more conducive to holiness than it is accordant with truth.

II. The doctrine that we are sanctified *by faith* cannot be affirmed too earnestly, but it may be affirmed too exclusively: and it is often observed that a strong convic-

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[c] "Holiness through Faith," p. 2.

[d] "Life of Henry Martyn," p. 42.

tion is apt to become one-sided; so that, while it is right in what is affirmed, it is wrong in what is denied. In the affirmation two meanings are to be distinguished,—the one referring to faith in general, the other to a particular exercise of it. If sanctification be the result of union with Christ, it must be through faith, since it is faith which unites us to Him. If it be wrought by those powers, and through those truths to which it has been ascribed, it must be through faith, since faith is but a name for the reception of those truths and reliance on those powers. When St. Peter says that God "put no difference between" Jewish and Gentile believers, "purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts xv. 9); and when the Lord speaks of the Gentiles as admitted to "an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in Me" (xxvi. 18), the words plainly refer to faith in Christ, in its *general* sense, as removing the disqualifying uncleanness of nature and creating a true consecration to God.

But we may also use the expression with a more limited meaning. Sanctification through faith will then signify the sanctification of character, the purification of mind and life, by trusting the promises and relying on the power of Christ, *for this particular object*: *i.e.*, by a continued act of dependence on Him as a Saviour from the present power of sin. It is a great truth, and one that has come to some minds like a new revelation of hope and strength. A well-known example of this experience is afforded by the spiritual history of Madame

Guyon; which, notwithstanding the peculiar colouring imparted by her character, circumstances, and the communion in which she lived, has its special interest in this very point of view. She was a confessor for the truth of sanctification by faith, in the midst of a Church which thought only of sanctification by observances, ceremonies, and ascetic rules. This way of thinking, strongly developed in the Romish system, is natural to the heart, and almost inevitable where Christ is not known. It will therefore always recur wherever (as in that system) the sense of immediate relations between the soul and the Saviour has been impaired by the interposition of other things. A defective apprehension of "Christ dwelling in the heart by faith," as God's method of sanctification, will lead either to a dependence for this end on ordinances and performances, or else to a state of vague, unsatisfying effort, in which prayer will be like the distant cries for help of one belated and alone. No words can too strongly affirm that all power for sanctification is in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ present in the soul, and that its "effectual working" is enjoyed through the constant exercise of faith.

And yet this is not the whole of the matter; and is not to be treated as if it were so, by explicit or implicit negations of that active share in this work on our own part, which grace does not supersede, but develop. When we hear of "ceasing from self-effort," of "leaving off asking for help," and "no longer praying for strength to overcome;" and when "abandoning oneself to Jesus,"

and "simply giving oneself to Christ to be kept," is treated as the *whole account* of what we have to do, we must be sensible of a great divergence from the tone and truth of Scripture. There we find a doctrine of justification by faith *only*, but no doctrine of sanctification by faith *only;* for the relations of Christ with His people in these two respects are not the same. In their justification it is one of *substitution* for them: in their sanctification, one of *association* with them; and language which tends to confuse this distinction soon becomes dangerous.

In the account of this matter as it appears in the Word of God, Sanctification is a command as well as a promise, a pursuit as well as a gift; and the work of man, instead of being absorbed in the single act of faith, is presented as rousing all his activities and taxing all his powers. "*Fight* the good fight; *strive* against sin; *cleanse* yourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit; *mortify* your members which are upon the earth; *exercise* yourself unto godliness; *work* out your own salvation; *watch* unto prayer; *follow* after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness; *giving all diligence,* add to your faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity." Such is the whole tenour of the apostolic teaching, an energetic expression of that very sense of the need of personal effort, of which we are recommended to divest ourselves in order to a premature "entering into rest."

I reach here the threshold of another department of

this subject, which is not within my present purpose: that which deals with its practical details; the means and evidences of progress, the causes and tokens of decline; healthy, morbid, and artificial developments; the use and misuse of ordinances and exercises of holy living and of excitements and stimulants to the feelings; the combination of the elements of devotion and action; above all, the training provided in the whole scheme of life, with its various relations, its successive periods, its changes, duties, trials, sufferings, appointed of God to minister to the sanctification of His children.

They are incidents of a transient state, and cast our thoughts forward on the future completion of this, as well as of the other parts of our salvation. We have seen the dispensations of God, advancing towards a perfection, as yet precluded by the conditions of our fallen state: but there is a dispensation yet to follow, in which these conditions will have ceased, and to which Christian hope looks on,—*Ἀπολείπεται σαββατισμὸς*,— a Sabbath-state is left for us; a state of holiness and of rest, of final deliverance from all evil, of reconstitution of the entire nature, and of complete consecration to God.



The Church.

BY THE

REV. DR. BOULTBEE.

VII.

THE CHURCH.

No word can be found among all the utterances of man at once so sacred and so terrible as this. It is the name of her whom "He purchased with His own blood,"—of her whom "the Lord nourisheth and cherisheth." But it is also the name which rang out over the ravaged fields of Languedoc before the murderous bands of De Montfort. It is the name in which the thousands of Spain, France, and the Netherlands, and the hundreds of England, perished in the flames. It is bright with salvation, pure with chastity, tender with charity, holy with the sanctity of the bliss of heaven: and it—the very same word—is blackened with ambition, discordant with cries of a thousand controversies, reddened with fire and with blood. The same word, but not the same thing: the one is of God, the other is of man. To the one "has been granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the white linen is the righteousness of saints:" the other was seen "arrayed

in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls." The one is "without spot or wrinkle or any such thing:" the other was seen "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus." They bear the same name in the tongues of men; but in the revelation of the mystery of God, the one is "the new JERUSALEM coming down from God out of HEAVEN, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband:" the other has "on her forehead a name written, Mystery, BABYLON the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the EARTH."

And yet sharp as the antithesis may be, and violent as the contrast may seem on the Apocalyptic canvas between the pure white robe of the heavenly spouse and the incarnadine glitter of the harlot, it is not altogether easy fully to separate them now; for among the many prophetic pictures which the Lord of His Church drew of her pilgrim condition, this has been unmistakably fulfilled: "While men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." And the word of command followed, "Let both grow together until the harvest; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them." Therefore the separation day is not yet, and the fair vision of purity is not yet. But though the actual separation may not yet be, the ideal distinction must first be clearly drawn, which alone can prevent that disastrous confusion between the mystic virgin and the mystic harlot. Nor can we speak of it other or better than Hooker has done:—

"That Church of Christ, which we properly term His body mystical, can be but one: neither can that one be sensibly discerned by any one, inasmuch as the parts thereof are some in heaven already with Christ, and the rest that are on earth (albeit their natural persons be visible) we do not discern under this property whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body. Only our minds by intellectual conceit are able to apprehend that such a real body there is: a body collective, because it containeth a huge multitude; a body mystical, because the mystery of their conjunction is removed altogether from sense. Whatsoever we read in Scripture concerning the endless love and saving mercy which God showeth towards His Church, the only proper subject thereof is this Church. Concerning this flock, it is that our Lord and Saviour hath promised 'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands.' They who are of this society have such marks and notes of distinction from all others, as are not objects unto our sense: only unto God, who seeth their hearts and understandeth all their secret cogitations; unto Him they are clear and manifest.....

"And as those everlasting promises of love, mercy, and blessedness belong to the mystical Church, even so, on the other side, when we read of any duty which the Church of God is bound unto, the Church whom this doth concern is a sensibly known company. And this visible Church in like sort is but one, continued from the first beginning of the world unto the last end.....The unity of which visible body and Church of Christ consisteth in that uniformity which all several persons thereunto belonging have, by reason of that *one Lord* whose servants they all profess themselves; that *one faith*, which they all acknowledge; that *one baptism*, wherewith they are all initiated. The visible Church of Christ is therefore one in outward

profession of those things which supernaturally appertain to the very essence of Christianity, and are necessarily required in every particular Christian man..... We speak now of the visible Church, whose children we signed with this mark, 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism.' In whomsoever these things are, the Church doth acknowledge them for her children: them only she holdeth for aliens and strangers in whom these things are not found."

We put on one side all other partial uses of the word Church, by which of old there were "the Churches of Macedonia," "the Church of the Thessalonians," and many others; and in modern times, "the Church of England," "the Lutheran Church," and many sectional titles beside. And putting these aside, the above passage from Hooker presents us with two, and two only, aspects of the idea indicated by the word Church, under one or the other of which all subordinate uses of this name must fall. Our Articles present us with the same distinction, though it is suggested rather than expressed. When the Nineteenth Article defines "the visible Church of Christ," it implies of necessity the existence of the Church invisible, without which the counter-epithet is devoid of meaning. This, then, is the primary "Evangelical Principle" in using the word Church: namely, a clear recognition of the essential and eternal distinction between the Church visible and the Church invisible. And though it is not in itself sufficient, yet, as far as it goes, it will be a tolerable test of a Divine to observe whether he uses this word in a manner which shows

that there is no confusion in his mind between the Church viewed under these two aspects; for here again we may quote Hooker: "For lack of diligent observing the difference, first, between the Church of God, mystical and visible, then between the visible Church, sound and corrupted, sometimes more and sometimes less, the oversights are neither few nor light that have been committed." And the grand distinction we have already quoted is fundamental: "The everlasting promises of love, mercy, and blessedness, belong to the mystical Church; the duties which the Church of God is bound unto concern a sensibly known company."

The importance of this primary distinction may be illustrated from the progress of the Tractarian movement. It is confessed that it was not a system deliberately thought out and launched into the world, but that it was rather one which gradually developed itself during the course of some years, as the minds of its authors worked out the results of certain principles. It is interesting therefore, as bearing on our subject, to examine what were some of their early principles. The second of the *Tracts for the Times*, has for its subject "the Catholic Church." It distinctly pronounces the Church whose existence we acknowledge in the Creed, to be "the Church Visible, with its Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." The fifth Tract follows with a more detailed claim of the same kind on behalf of the Church of England. The eleventh, on "the Visible Church," already defined as above, claims for the ministry (that

is the episcopal clergy) that it "is an appointed condition of the salvation of the elect." Further, it interprets the passage, "there is *one body*" of the visible Church: *i.e.*, the Episcopal communion. It asserts that "the word Church, as used in Scripture, ordinarily means this actually existing visible body."

These positions being laid down, it becomes quite obvious how the whole system of modern Anglicanism and Ritualism has grown out of them by a natural development. And on examination it will be found that they involve the very confusion against which Hooker warned us: "Lack of diligence in observing the difference between the Church of God mystical and visible." The object of this paper is not controversy: it is to lay down principles. And if we went no further, we should have said enough to show that "Evangelical principles" and modern High Church principles are in this matter different. The one draws a sharp and clear line of distinction between Holy Scripture as applied to the Church visible or invisible; the other tends more or less avowedly to obliterate that line, or at least so to blur it that the individual Christian shall be thrown on the visible Church, with its ministry and its sacraments, for his share in the promises.

But when we turn in the next place to the consideration of the Church in its visible aspect, we shall find reason for further caution. We have not now to speak of the glory and blessedness which shall be when the Church invisible shall become for ever the Church

visible, and the "bride, the Lamb's wife," shall be seen "having the glory of God, and her light like unto a stone most precious." We have rather to speak of that mixed condition of things which the parable of the tares and wheat contemplated, and which arises of necessity out of the earthly state, the sinful hearts, and the imperfect enlightenment of those who profess the faith of Christ. When we contemplate this, we recognise at once the possibility of the contrast with which this paper opened. So polluted, so marred, so disguised, may some portions of the outward Church become, that they may have upon them more or less of the traits of the Apocalyptic harlot; and one, in particular, may well seem to embody them all.

There are some fundamental principles which we shall seek to set forth on this section of our subject likewise. We have already seen that the basis of modern Anglicanism, out of which Ritualism has grown, was an absolute identification of the Church of the New Testament with the Church Episcopal. The ground taken in the *Tracts for the Times* above named, is that our Lord founded an organized institution or corporation in the person of His Apostles. That they carried out His instructions and will by establishing, first, the Order of Deacons, then that of Presbyters, lastly that of Bishops (by whatever name then styled). That in historical succession this institution has been perpetuated without loss or default, and is to be found in this island in the Church of England, and there only. That outside this

there is no sacrament, and no covenanted grace, though, through infinite mercy, there may possibly be found some means of salvation. We are not concerned here to show where this system diverges from that of the older English High Church divines. This has been effectually done by Dean Goode and other eminent controversialists. Our business is to show where "Evangelical principles" break off from those statements.

With regard to the historical part of the above summary, we find ourselves perfectly free, as English Churchmen, to deal with it as critically as we please. There is not a single word in the Thirty-nine Articles defining any form of Church government, whether episcopal or otherwise, to be of the essence of the constitution of the Church Visible. There is, however, an assertion in the preface to the Ordinal to the following purport: "It is evident unto all men diligently reading the Holy Scriptures and ancient Authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons." We have not space, even if it were our present purpose, to discuss the bearings of this bold statement. Individually, we may simply say that we accept it as setting forth historical truth, when properly guarded and explained. We think that both Timothy and Titus held an office of an episcopal nature. We think that some ancient bishoprics may be traced up to the lifetime of St. John at least; and we think that some other historical reasons may be set forth bearing in the same

direction. But how far there was an exclusively Episcopal organization within the first century; how far the primitive Bishop was of a different *Order* from the presbyter; and how far he required and received in all cases Episcopal consecration, or was simply elected to his office,—these and the like questions have received elaborate discussion at the hands of by no means Low Church divines; and, to say the least, cannot be disposed of by the summary process of assertion claiming divine and exclusive authority for modern Episcopacy. Upon questions of this class we do not here make any statement. We have no right to pronounce on behalf of others whose opinions may probably vary considerably; but we are brought thus to another distinct "Evangelical principle." Speaking as English Churchmen, we say that the historical statement in the preface to the Ordinal, when it has been fairly weighed, binds us to no exclusive claim on behalf of the Episcopal organization, but is simply meant as a justification for our own practice. And, if this needed further confirmation, we should add that it is borne out by the known views and opinions of those at whose hands we received it. When we come to a yet more serious view of the subject, our Sixth Article tells us that "what is not read in Holy Scripture, or may be proved thereby, is not to be required as an article of the faith." We entirely fail to see a visible Church, constituted under Episcopal authority, laid down in the New Testament as a necessary condition of covenant grace. We are accordingly led to this further statement

of "Evangelical principles." As members of the Church of England, we say that we rejoice in her constitution, speaking generally and apart from the consideration of anything which may call for reform. We think we have "a goodly heritage" of primitive antiquity in her ordinances and organization; but we deny these to be essential to the outer framework of the Christian Church. And we hold, with all our greatest divines, that Christ has not left any one invariable pattern of Church polity for the obedience of His people.

This is so distinctly the ground taken by English theologians in general, previously to the rise of the modern Oxford school, that it almost seems a mere platitude to assert it. Yet it may be of some avail to remind the reader that the Church of England had to struggle very soon after the Reformation with a powerful party who maintained the contrary, and asserted that Christ had left to His Church, clearly drafted in the New Testament, a complete system of Church government. That party was the early Puritan, and that system was the Presbyterian, as developed by Calvin. The challenge given by Cartwright and taken up by Hooker, was no other than this: "We offer to show the discipline (Presbyterian system) to be a part of the Gospel." "I speak of the discipline as of a part of the Gospel, and therefore neither under nor above the Gospel, but the Gospel." "He that was as faithful as Moses, left us clear instructions for the government of the Church: but Christ was as faithful as Moses." "Either God hath left

a prescript form of government now, or else He is less careful under the New Testament than under the Old."

This was plain speaking, and those old Presbyterians stoutly maintained no less than this on behalf of their system of discipline and Church order. Need we ask how the battle was fought; what forces were brought into the field; or what was the strategy of the rival commanders? The modern Oxford school would attempt the position right in front, by direct assault. They would take against their Presbyterian opponent a counter-line of equal dogmatic precision. They have claimed for Episcopacy, as we have already seen, the same divine right, the same indefeasible claim, as the early Presbyterians did for their system. Like them they contend that the constitution of the Church is, and must be divine, and that to suppose the blessed Founder of the Church of the New Testament to have left it without a formal constitution, would be to think Him less careful than Moses over his house.

Not so the English divines who fought out that controversy of old. *The Ecclesiastical Polity* of Hooker is in everyone's mouth, but we may fear is scarcely studied. It may therefore be worth while to note his method of meeting the claims of Divine authority made for Presbyterianism. He advances no counterclaim of the same kind on behalf of the English Church. On the other hand, he cuts away from beneath either party the very possibility for such a claim. He argues, in his second and third books, that to suppose Scripture to give

detailed rules of life for all things done by man, rather than to lay down principles capable of application, is a mistake highly injurious to Divine revelation. He then traverses the position itself, showing that Church polity is a thing in itself variable; that while matters of faith and salvation are distinctly revealed, it is not necessary in the nature of things, and in point of fact it is not true, that Scripture should lay down any particular form of Church government. And speaking more directly of Episcopacy itself, while he laments that "certain reformed Churches, the Scottish especially, and the French, have not that which best agreeth with the sacred Scripture,—I mean the government which is by Bishops,"—yet that "unto the complete form of Church polity much may be requisite which the Scripture teacheth not; and much which it hath taught become unrequisite, sometimes because we need not use it, sometimes also because we cannot."

We begin to know what is meant by the hackneyed phrase, "the moderation of the Church of England," when we find that in the face of the most exclusive pretentions, so fair, so calm, so unimpassioned is the tone of her foremost champion. After this we may repudiate the taunt of Low Churchmanship, when we lay down as an "Evangelical principle" the abandonment of any claim on behalf of Episcopacy, that Christ has made that or any other form of polity obligatory on the allegiance of His people. If Hooker was a Low Churchman in this respect, then indeed Evangelical Churchmen

are so too. But if the blow which smites them lights upon Hooker also, it may haply glance back with a keener edge upon the truth of the English Church-standing of those who have stricken with the ill-aimed weapon.

Thus assured of our position, and strongly entrenched as English Churchmen within the ancient lines and well-tried ramparts, we can afford to be indifferent to the charge brought against us of having no Church principles. We hold it to be greatly to the credit of the Evangelical Churchmen of England that in so few instances they have been provoked by constant taunts to forsake their allegiance, or be false to their Church principles. It is the tendency of human nature in resisting one extreme to fly off to the other. "Church principles" is the name given for the last thirty years by a powerful and wealthy section of our Church to the new and extreme dogmas which have agitated society. Under this name are comprehended whatever has flowed from that main sacerdotal assumption, that the Episcopal Church of England is the one divinely-appointed Church and spouse of Christ,—an assumption which we as distinctly repudiate. But Evangelical Churchmen do not in weak folly forget that they have "Church principles" too, the inheritance of many generations. They prize the Gospel of the grace of God above all organizations; and deem it confined to none. But while they cherish most the promises of grace and salvation which are sealed to the mystical Church of God, they

hold that their earthly duties attach them to that visible society of the Church of England in which they were baptized; whose Articles contain what they most surely believe of the truth of God; which nourishes them out of the Word of God; to which they owe their allegiance; and for whose purity of doctrine and fellowship they will struggle even to the end. Many of them, when most sorely pressed in conscience by flagrant corruptions here or there infecting its communion, have looked forth over the world. They have found the Gospel preached faithfully in many places; they have seen flourishing congregations and isolated effort: but few have thought that they could see anywhere else that which they enjoyed in the Church of their birthright,—an organization, a doctrine, and a discipline worthy of their love and justly claiming their allegiance. Thus, then, if principles may be tested by their results, after allowing for a few eccentric exceptions, we claim for the Evangelical section of the Church of England that they have shown themselves her devoted and loyal adherents; and that therefore a loyal and enlightened grasp of Church principles and recognition of Church authority must be an "Evangelical principle."

One more chief branch of our subject requires consideration which will also lead to the enunciation of a "principle." When we speak of the Visible Church, what idea have we of its constituent members, or of their relations one to another? Or, more exactly, taking

the broad distinction into clergy and laity, what is the general relation of the two orders: how far and in what respects is either subordinate to the other?

Here, again, with a view to being distinct, it is well to set forth some of the contrasted opinions. We have seen the extreme case lately exhibited to the whole world in the Vatican Council, where an assemblage of Bishops only, manipulated by the Ultramontanes, claimed to be the Church by full representation, and handed over the whole of what in their opinion was the Church, to the sole infallible jurisdiction of the Pope, in all matters of faith and morals. We have failed to find, in the early *Tracts for the Times*, a clear utterance on this head, distinctly formulating the relations of the clergy to the laity. Yet, in our search for *principles*, we prefer to go back to them rather than to select more recent developments. The tone of those early Tracts is for the most part tentative, suggestive, and cautious. Yet the general result seems to be clear. The Church Visible in England, according to the Tracts, has been shown to be the Church of England organized under Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. To the Apostles was committed the sole power of organizing and ruling the Church. The Bishops are successors to the Apostles, and, short of miraculous gifts, possess much the same power as they did. Each has received "that Apostolical power over the Church, for the support of which the Redeemer pledged Himself that His assistance should never be wanting to the end of time." With regard to

legislative power, it is stated that Convocation is "a sort of Ecclesiastical Parliament composed of Bishops or clergy, from which alone changes in the Articles, the Liturgy, or general internal government, can fitly or legally emanate." We have lived to see the private judgment of individual clergymen overruling the decisions of Bishops, on the ground of alleged Catholic doctrine or usage superior to them. But the earlier statements of modern Anglicans, which doubtless tended greatly to conciliate Episcopal feelings, elevated Bishops to something very like equality with the Apostles. "To them," they said, "we willingly and affectionately relinquish their high privileges and honours; we encroach not upon the rights of the SUCCESSORS OF THE APOSTLES; we touch not their sword and crosier. Yet, surely we may be their shield-bearers in the battle, without offence, and by our voice and deeds be to them what Luke and Timothy were to St. Paul." So spake Tract No. 1, in 1833. We have heard the organ of the advanced party, in 1874, style the dignified and large-hearted prelate who now sits in the chair of St. Augustine "a Scotch adventurer."

The result of our inquiry into the principles of the opposite party seems to be clear, and it is this: to the clergy belong all Ecclesiastical jurisdiction, government, and legislative power; to the laity belongs—obedience.

Here we feel that "Evangelical principles" diverge widely from all such opinions. No doubt individuals differ greatly as to the precise relations of lay and

clerical power in the Church, and we are not called upon categorically to lay down any statement on that subject. But we may state it as an unquestionable "Evangelical principle," that the clergy are not "lords over God's heritage;" that "the visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men;" that the clergy are the ministers of the Church, and in their appointment, by primitive usage, the laity had, to say the least, much influence; that the laity being, together with the clergy, the Church, have an inherent right to a due share in all that relates to the organization, purity of doctrine, and discipline of the Church. And, in particular, we say that the English laity, however reluctant to interfere, have never forgotten and never abandoned this inalienable right of the free Christian man.

But here another principle requires conspicuous notice, —one which is by no means distinctive, but which the Evangelical Churchman firmly holds. Because some have unduly exalted the position of the clergy, he does not rush into the opposite extreme, of confusing the functions and duties of clergy and laity in the visible Church of Christ! In the mystical body of Christ, fervency of love and firm grasp of faith can alone mark any gradations in the august equality; but in the duties of the Church visible, we say with Hooker, that "All that are of the Church cannot jointly and equally work. And so the first thing in polity required is a difference of persons in the Church; without which difference

those functions cannot, in orderly sort, be executed. Hereupon, we hold that God's clergy are a state which hath been, and will be, as long as there is a Church upon earth, necessarily by the plain Word of God Himself, a state whereunto the rest of God's people must be subject, as touching things that appertain to their souls' health. . . . Moreover, it cannot enter into any man's conceit to think it lawful that every man which listeth should take upon him charge in the Church; and therefore a solemn admittance is of such necessity that without it there can be no Church polity."

These broad distinctions Evangelical Churchmen firmly hold, and they faithfully adhere to those regulations which their own Church has made to carry them out. If it is not possible to go much further, and enunciate distinctly the several functions, rights, and duties, and powers of clergy and laity, it is mainly because these are not so laid down in Holy Scripture as to be susceptible of exact definition. Of these Hooker says: "A number of particularities there are, which make for the more convenient being of these principal and perpetual parts in Ecclesiastical polity, but yet are not of such constant use and necessity in God's Church. Of this kind are . . . the enlargement or abridgment of functions ministerial . . . even whatsover doth by way of formality and circumstance concern any public action of the Church."

To this we must add the utter confusion caused by the Papal usurpation, and the extinction of all lay

power in the constitution of the mediæval Church. With the spectacle before our eyes of that terrible spiritual despotism, how hard it is to imagine, even in theory, the exact division of the power of clergy and laity which shall best rule and order any section of the visible Church! When sacerdotal domination is so baneful, the temptation is to rend even just authority from the clerical hand.

And if in our own country, clergy, acting individually or in synod, manifest intentions to seat themselves in the same autocratical throne from which their predecessors tyrannized of old, they are only complicating the question. They thus make it still more difficult for the calm judging Churchman, whether lay or clerical, to pronounce on the right or expedient limit of the power of either order. They are driving off to a more remote period the time for which so many are longing, when clergy and laity in amicable union shall deliberate in earnest council on "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Then, perhaps, a clearer perception of the wants of the Church will lead both, laying aside all mutual jealousies, to recognise without confusion and with hearty co-operation, the work in the kingdom of God to which each is called.

Such, then, we hold to be distinctive "Evangelical principles" in reference to the Church. They relate to three important matters. The distinction between the Church Visible and the Church Invisible; the necessity, as distinguished from the excellence and antiquity of

Episcopal organization; the relation of the clergy to the laity in the Visible Church. The main opposing views on these points lead in opposite directions. They do not bring all men on either side to the same issues, or to draw precisely the same consequences; but they constitute clearly marked lines of departure, tending by legitimate consequence to definite results. The conclusions to which we have been led are therefore worthy of being enunciated as principles. That they are the principles of our Articles, of our leading Divines, and of the English constitution, we have no doubt. That they are the just deductions from New Testament teaching on the Church and its ministers, we are fully persuaded, and we have no hesitation in propounding them as distinctive "Evangelical principles."

The Nature and Office of the Christian Ministry.

BY THE

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VIII.

THE NATURE AND OFFICE OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

WHAT is the true nature and proper work of the Christian ministry? Is it a sacrificing priesthood,—either after the likeness of the Levitical priesthood, or after the order of Melchizedec? Does it correspond, in its various orders, by a close and exact analogy, with the priesthood of the Old Testament? Or is it properly and essentially a different kind of office, resembling more closely that of the prophets than of the priests under the old economy of the Law? Is the Christian pastor, whether bishop, presbyter, or deacon, the ἱερεύς (or *sacerdos*) of the Jew or the heathen? Or is he rather a divinely appointed messenger of glad tidings, a minister of reconciliation? A right or wrong answer to this inquiry must affect the whole range of Christian doctrine and practice. If the sacerdotal theory be true, then Evangelical Churchmen, and Protestant Christians in general, lie under a dangerous misconcep-

tion of the Christian system. If it be false and unscriptural, then it must be a spreading leprosy, which, wherever it is received, must tend to obscure the Gospel, and pervert the whole constitution of the Church of Christ. To decide this grave question, our proper appeal is to the inspired Word of God, and to its authority alone. When appeal is made to ecclesiastical traditions of the middle ages, or loose talk about Catholic principles, the words of our blessed Saviour ought to sound in our ears: "In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

When we turn for light on this subject to the New Testament, one striking fact, almost decisive in itself, meets us at the first perusal of these sacred writings. The title of priest, the word ἱερεύς, and its derived forms, are never once applied to the Christian ministry. We have mention of Apostles and the Twelve, of other Seventy,—of Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers,—of bishops or overseers, of presbyters or elders, of deacons or ministers, of helps and governments. But the name of priest (that is, of *hiereus* or *sacerdos*) never once occurs in connection with the public and appointed officers of the Church of Christ. How could this be possible, if the true nature of their office, its proper definition, were that of a sacrificing priesthood? Is it not a virtual charge of folly and negligence against the Holy Spirit, by whose Divine inspiration these writings were given, to assert that in revealing the will and mind of God on a subject of such high import-

ance, He should never once employ the fittest and most appropriate term? That he should institute and ordain, under the Gospel, a sacrificing priesthood, on the right fulfilment of whose sacrificial work the whole life of the Church was to depend; and never once, either in the history of the Church's founding, or in the letters given for its code of lasting instruction and guidance, see fit to describe these new officers by their main function, and their most proper and characteristic name?

Still it cannot be denied that the priestly character of the Christian clergy is a doctrine very widely received and very zealously maintained. It lies at the root of what is called the Anglo-Catholic movement. It is formally embodied in the decrees of the Church of Rome. Is it equally accepted by the Eastern Churches. It has a seeming, verbal warrant in the use of the word *priest* in our own Prayer-book. It is widely adopted even by moderate High Churchmen; and its denial by those who are called Low Churchmen is treated as a grave and serious defect in their views of the Christian system. Scripture analogies, or even more direct warrants of Scripture evidence, are pleaded in its favour. It moulds the convictions and colours the language of many who still adhere to the great fundamental outlines of the Gospel. Let us endeavour, then, to view the matter more closely, and discover the real testimony of Scripture on the subject, when its various statements, both in the Old and the New Testament, are compared together.

The arguments in favour of the sacerdotal view of the Christian ministry may be briefly summed as follows. First, not only among the Jews, but in nearly every heathen nation, and every creed of the ancient world, a priest and a sacrifice formed the main and essential part of their religious system. Can Christianity be the solitary exception? especially when, as a matter of history, the distinction of the clergy and laity, and claims extensively made by the former to the exercise of priestly functions, form one main and prominent fact in the Church history of eighteen hundred years?

But the analogy of the Old Testament seems to carry us much further than this vague and general presumption, from the usage of all early nations, and the actual history of the Church of Christ. The institutions of the Law of Moses, we are plainly told, were types and resemblances, pictures and shadows, of better things to come in the days of Messiah. The Christian Lord's Day replaces the Jewish Sabbath, Baptism takes the place of Circumcision, and the Lord's Supper of the Jewish Passover. Two more festivals, Passover and Pentecost, find their exact counterpart in the Christian festivals of Easter and Whitsuntide, known to have been observed from the first and purest days of the Church of Christ. These multiplied analogies need to be completed by a Christian priesthood, answering in its main features to the priesthood under the Law, but transformed and moulded into a new shape, in harmony with the fuller light and higher privileges of the Gospel.

The argument from the analogy between the people of Israel and the Christian Church may be carried still further. It was promised to the Israelites, when they received the law, that, if they were obedient, they should be a kingdom of priests, as well as a peculiar people. (Ex. xix. 5, 6.) The whole nation, in contrast with the surrounding heathen, were to have a priestly character. And yet this did not forbid the selection of one priestly tribe out of the whole nation; and of one priestly family, that of Aaron, from the tribe; and of one person of that family, the High Priest, in whom alone the office gained its full and perfect development.

The same title of a kingdom of priests, or royal priesthood, given in Exodus to Israel, is transferred by St. Peter to the whole company of baptized believers. (1 Peter ii. 5, 9.) This possession, then, by the whole Church of a priestly character cannot disprove the view, that within that Church priestly functions may be specially intrusted to one class, distinct from the rest, a figurative tribe of Levi; and that among these there may be gradations in the fulness with which that sacred character is possessed and enjoyed. This would not destroy, but rather seem to complete and strengthen, the analogy between Israel and the Christian Church, which the words of the Apostle clearly imply. And again, this priesthood of all Christians, taught here distinctly, excludes and disproves the doctrine, sometimes hastily affirmed in the name of Protestantism, that the Christian religion owns and admits no priesthood but in

the one person of Christ alone. On the contrary, the same words seem rather to strengthen the interpretation which refers the words of the Prophet Isaiah to the clergy of the Christian Church, the figurative Israel in the latter times: "I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord."

Again: the Apostle, in writing to the Hebrews, expounds the oath of God,—that Messiah should be "a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedec." There is a priestly order of Melchizedec no less than of Aaron. But an order can hardly refer to one single person alone. To whom, then, can the description apply? Must it not be to the Christian clergy, ordained to replace the earlier priests of the Jewish law, the sons of Aaron? For these are not constituted by descent from an earthly parent, but by the authority and grace of the risen Saviour. They partake thus of the power of that endless life into which He entered when he ascended on high, led captivity captive, and received gifts for men. Where, but in them, can there be found a whole order of priests, after the order of Melchizedec, and not of Aaron? In this way the analogy may seem complete. As the Lord's Day replaces the Jewish Sabbath, Baptism the rite of Circumcision, the Lord's Supper the Passover, and Easter and Whitsuntide the yearly return of Passover and Pentecost, so, too, the ancient priesthood, after the order of Aaron, will be replaced by the Christian clergy. These will be the predicted priests after the order of Melchizedec. Like him they receive tithes

of all Christian people, and bring forth bread and wine, to refresh in their conflicts the spiritual warriors of the Church of Christ. Their services, too, but in a still higher sense, may be designed for an example and shadow of heavenly things; their office may be to represent on earth the priestly services described in the Apocalypse, and carried on by our Great High Priest, the risen Saviour, before the incense-altar in heaven.

Such, I believe, is a true statement of the sacerdotal theory, and of the Scriptural analogies and inferences on which it is conceived to rest. The outline is attractive and imposing: it does not look like a blind fancy of mere superstition, but a reasonable inference from comparing Scripture with Scripture, and tracing out the deeper lessons of the Word of God. It is an opinion which has commended itself to many thoughtful minds. It cannot be met by declaiming vaguely against the errors of Ritualism, nor by a loud assertion, directly opposed to St. Peter and the Apocalypse, that Christianity knows nothing of any priesthood but that of Christ alone. If deceptive and untrue, care and patience must be needful to point the nature and source of the error, and separate it from truths with which it is closely entwined. Analogies in Scripture may be misunderstood, and lead to serious error, but the sin and folly is great when they are superciliously cast aside. The readiness of too many Christians in these days to get rid of the Old Testament as Jewish legend, and treat the Gospel as a message born suddenly into the world

without a parent, is a dark and dangerous sign. It is false to the spirit of religious faith and reverence, and to all just views of Christianity, as the crown and completion of a series of Divine messages from the beginning of time.

But this view of the Christian clergy, which maintains them to be properly a sacrificing priesthood, on whatever seeming analogies it may rest, is open to the following decisive objections.

I. First, the theory is wholly wanting in direct evidence of its truth. On the sacerdotal theory the priestly character of the clergy is the very life and essence of the Christian Church. It is of primary and fundamental importance. On its reality depends the alternative of genuine sacraments or spurious counterfeits,—of true membership in the Church of Christ, or of a mere shadow, delusive and worthless. A doctrine of this kind, if true, must rest on Scripture evidence of the plainest and least ambiguous kind. Secondary truths may rest on a secondary degree of testimony, and be less clearly revealed. Such is infant baptism. The Church of Christ might still exist and thrive, with a very slight change in its order and institutions, and none in its great doctrines, if Christian children, though unbaptized, were trained up in the fear and love of God, and only baptized at the age when confirmation is usually administered. For a secondary doctrine we may well be content with secondary and constructive

evidence. But the sacerdotal theory, if true, is fundamental to the creed and practice of Christianity: on its admission or rejection a right or wrong view of the sacraments, a just use or dangerous abuse of all Church ordinances, must mainly depend. Of such a doctrine in proportion to its importance must be the clearness and fulness with which we may reasonably expect it to be revealed.

Now of such direct evidence no trace can be found. In its place we are offered a doubtful inference from the religious views and practices of Jews and heathens, an obscure and slippery argument from the mention of the order of Melchizedec, an ingenious deduction from the consecration of the tribe of Levi and the family of Aaron, and a strange and grotesque inference from the symbolic imagery in the grand closing prophecy of the New Testament.

On the other hand, the leading fact is plain. The New Testament speaks much of the Priesthood of Christ and of His great Sacrifice; it often alludes to the priests of the Jewish law; in two places it ascribes a priestly character to the whole Church: but it never once applies the term priest, or any kindred phrase or term, to the apostles or their successors, to the prophets and evangelists, or pastors and teachers, of the Church of Christ. We search successively through the Book of Acts and the Epistles of St. Paul, St. James, St. Peter, and St. John, and no such example can be found. Lists are repeatedly given, in Corinthians and

in Ephesians, of various gifts bestowed by the risen Saviour, and various offices exercised within the Church; but no mention of priesthood, no term having a priestly character, is found among them. In Hebrews the Apostle refers largely to the Jewish priesthood and services, and their antitypes under the Gospel. But when he refers to the ministers of the Church, it is simply in these words: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls, that they may do it with joy, not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you." And when he exhorts them to spiritual sacrifices, it is as offered by Christians themselves, not for them by the clergy: "By Him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name."

St. Peter declares that all Christians are "a royal priesthood." But he varies his language when he describes the office of Christian teachers: "The elders that are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." Of any priestly office, specially committed to himself and these fellow-elders, he says not a word. The silence of St. James, St. John, and St. Jude is not less unbroken and complete. As to this sacerdotal theory, all seem with one voice to take up the answer of St. Paul on a kindred topic: "If any man be contentious, we Apostles have no such doctrine, neither in our day the Churches of God."

The appeal to Jewish and heathen precedents labours under a fatal defect. It assumes that the Gospel implies no important or fundamental change in the relation between a holy God and sinful men. But the exact reverse is plainly true. The Gospel is defined by the Apostle to be a message of reconciliation. Its main fact is the revelation of that Divine Sacrifice by which the sin of the world is taken away, the veil of separation rent, and a new and living way opened for the sinner's access to God. Hence the whole economy of priesthood and sacrifice enjoined under the law, and continued among the heathen from the usage of patriarchal times, may be wholly unsuitable to the Church of Christ, under the higher privileges of the new covenant. It may be really like building up anew that wall of partition which an act of Divine mercy, amazing and mysterious, has been expressly designed to break down and remove for ever. At least it must be wholly unsafe to rest a main element in the constitution of the Church, in the absence of direct evidence, on the ground of a supposed analogy, when there is contrast, and not resemblance, in one main condition on which that analogy depends.

But the priesthood of the Christian clergy, it has been affirmed of late in a public charge, rests on more direct evidence of Scripture. They, and they only, are priests after the order of Melchizedec. A bold and startling assertion. It may safely be affirmed, in reply, that the contrast is hardly less complete than that

which the Apostle himself has drawn between the Levitical and Aaronic, and the Melchizedec priesthood. Three characters of the latter are given, on which its essence depends; and not one of the three belongs to the Christian clergy, viewed as a class, and when defined either by Episcopal or Presbyterian ordination.

First, it is a heavenly priesthood, and its scene is not earth, but heaven. Of Him to whom it is clearly ascribed, we read presently,—"If He were on earth, He would not even be a priest, seeing there are priests who offer gifts according to the law." So that we learn, from the express teaching of the Apostle, that this Melchizedec priesthood of our Lord himself began to be exercised at His resurrection, when He entered into the heavenly places, and was consecrated for evermore. But the ministry of the Christian clergy is exercised here on earth, and not like that of Christ, the true Melchizedec, in the heavenly places, before the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.

Next, the Melchizedec priesthood is unchangeable. The word *ἀπάραβατον* implies that it abides in the persons who once received it, and does not pass to others in consequence of their removal by death. But the successiveness in the Christian clergy and in the Levitical priesthood is exactly the same. Bishop succeeds to Bishop in the same See, presbyter and incumbent to presbyter and incumbent in the same parochial charge. All the features, expressly excluded in the priesthood of Melchizedec, are here facts of daily and hourly occur-

rence; so that the claim, by an official of the English Church, that its clergy are in truth priests after the order of Melchizedec, implies a strange blindness to the most conspicuous features of the sacred text, and to the most notorious facts of diocesan and parochial experience.

In the third place, the Aaronic priesthood was after the law of a carnal commandment; but that of Melchizedec, "after the power of an endless life." The carnal commandment, or ordinance of the flesh, was that which made the Levites, or sons of Aaron, priests in virtue of their natural birth alone. But our Lord entered upon his priestly office with a nobler warrant,—the oath of God and the life of the resurrection, when those words were fulfilled,—"Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more: death hath no more dominion over Him."

To which description, then, does Episcopal ordination most nearly belong? To the former, and not the latter. It conveys no resurrection life; it ensures no possession of genuine spiritual life and holiness of heart. What it does imply is the satisfaction of certain conditions of age, education, absence of formal objection, and title or local charge, prescribed by ecclesiastical laws, which give no absolute security for any moral condition whatever. The word "carnal" must not prejudice or deceive us in this comparison. It has no reference in the words of the Apostle to sinfulness and corruption, but to externality alone. The Levite was admitted to his office

by the simple fact that he was born from the tribe of Levi. He was admitted to exercise its duties at twenty-five or thirty years of age, a limit prescribed by an outward law. So with the priests, the sons of Aaron. An outward law assigned them their office in virtue of their descent, and fixed the method of its exercise from the course to which they belonged. The case is just the same with candidates for English ordination. They must be males, not females, English subjects, have reached a prescribed limit of age, have passed through certain examinations, obtained certain testimonials, be presented to a certain title, subscribe to certain formularies, take certain oaths, and receive a certain imposition of hands; all external ordinances of the very same kind as in the Jewish priesthood, but wholly unlike the higher rule of that Melchizedec priesthood, which is conferred, and continues for ever, after the power of an endless life. Instead of exact resemblance between a Christian clergy episcopally ordained, and the Apostle's definition of priests after the order of Melchizedec, there is thus, in the three main characters he specifies, a direct, entire, and absolute contrast.

This objection only gathers new strength when the attempt is made to combine this idea of a Melchizedec priesthood in the Christian Church with the analogy of St. Peter, and to trace in our clergy a threefold priesthood of a higher kind, bearing strict analogy to the Levites, priests, and high priest under the law of Moses.

The theory may assume three different forms, all inconsistent with each other, equally wanting in direct Scripture evidence, and equally loaded with inconsistencies of a kind fatal to its truth. They may be styled, for distinctness, the High Presbyterian, the High Episcopal, and the Papal theories.

The first alternative recognises that our Lord alone is the true High Priest after the order of Melchizedec, who occupies the place of the Aaronic high priest under the Law of Moses. To complete the analogy, it sees in the Christian deacons the counterpart of the Levites, who had no proper priesthood, but fulfilled ministerial duties to lighten the labour of the priests. Therefore the Christian clergy of all ranks, whether called Presbyters, Bishops, Archbishops, or Patriarchs, constitute the middle class, and answer collectively to the Melchizedec priests of the new economy. This view of the analogy, then, combines two main features of High Presbyterian doctrine. It exalts the clergy, as a class, high above the laity, as exercising a true priesthood, higher and nobler than that of the law, and equally severing them from the lay people. But all distinctions among these priests are details of small importance, which have no place in the Divine analogy on which their authority rests. Every Presbyter is a priest after the new order of Melchizedec; and every Bishop, Archbishop, or Patriarch is really nothing more, except for certain bye-laws of the Church, for the one sole High Priest is Christ himself, who is passed into the heavens.

This view, then, towards the laity, leads to a clerical despotism, while among the clergy it tends to democratic equality. But its vital defect is apparent at the first glance. Its legs are most unequal. Instead of the threefold gradation in the Law of Moses, we have something wholly different: an immense, sudden, and violent contrast between a High Priest risen from the dead, enthroned in glory, and ministering in heaven, and a countless number of sinful, imperfect, mortal men, performing sacred offices on earth, and claiming from their office a like superiority over their fellow-Christians as that which parts their own order from the risen God-man standing before the golden incense-altar in heaven.

The second view is the High Episcopal. It recognises the double fact that Christ is the true High Priest in heaven, and that His heavenly work must not be confused with the functions intrusted to His servants in the Church militant below. But it looks here for a complete resemblance to the order of the Jewish priesthood. Each diocese, on this view, is a kind of miniature, in which the threefold order of the Levitical ministry is reproduced in a higher form. The Bishop is the Fountain of authority, the immediate representative of Christ himself, and answers thus to the Jewish high priest. The Presbyters, the middle rank of the clergy, answer to the priests of the family of Aaron. The Deacons, who perform ministerial functions, and are not admitted to pronounce absolution, or consecrate the elements, answer to the Levites of the old economy. At the same

time, while the analogies and gradations are like those of the Levitical priesthood, the main features resemble those of Melchizedec's history. The priesthood are tied to descent from no particular family. They are appointed by a power derived from the risen Saviour, and share thus, in a certain sense, in the power of His endless life. They receive tithes, like Melchizedec, and bring forth bread and wine, to become, after consecration, the heavenly food of the soldiers of Christ.

This theory, compared with the last, is internally more harmonious and consistent; but its defects, though of an opposite kind, are no less serious and decisive. It replaces the despotism of the Presbyterate and a democratic level of Presbyters, by a still more absolute despotism of each Bishop over Presbyters and laity, and a mere anarchy of bishops and dioceses. So far as the theory can be a guide, each Bishop represents Christ himself within his own diocese, and within its limits may claim almost absolute submission, while beyond that diocese his jurisdiction ceases. The Church universal, on this view, is made up of a large number of Episcopal dioceses, wholly independent of each other, and in each of these the Bishop himself represents Christ, ordains the rest of the clergy, delegates to them what power he pleases, and in fact reigns supreme. But to suppose the true ideal of the Church universal to be an anarchy of petty despotisms, side by side, offends equally against the instincts of Christian liberty and of Christian order. The theory, when reduced to

practice, can only be a bridge of transition, either to a more compact and complete ecclesiastical organization on the one side, or to Presbyterian equality or Congregational independence on the other. This scheme gives us a priesthood, which is neither after the order of Aaron nor that of Melchizedec; a unity of the diocese, inconsistent with the unity of the whole Church visible, and tending to break it into a thousand separate fragments; and an authority of the Bishop within his diocese, fatal to the rights of all the Presbyters and Deacons, and destructive of the liberty wherewith Christ makes His people free.

The third alternative is the Papal. Its outline is no less complete than the last, and is on a wider and larger scale. The work of Christ—the High Priest in heaven,—is kept apart as before from the whole system of priestly service and representation in the Church militant below. This, as one great whole, is to resemble and represent the higher worship of heaven, and also the graduations under the Law of Moses. It agrees with the others in comparing the Deacons of the Church with the Levites under the law. It agrees with the second, not the first, in keeping the priestly work of Christ apart from its earthly types or representatives, so that they have to supply counterparts both to the priests and high priests of the law, and not to the priests alone. But it sets before us one such high priest for the whole Church visible, and not for each separate diocese. Thus the Bishop sinks once more, as in the high Pres-

byterian view, to the level of the simple presbyter; and one visible high priest, the Bishop of the See of St. Peter replaces, by one magnificent despotism, the thousand petty fragmentary despotisms of the other view. Of the three varieties of the sacerdotal theory it is thus the simplest, the most consistent and complete, and exhibits the common analogy on which they rest in its most plausible shape, and on the most magnificent and imposing scale. But it thus brings into fuller relief the double consequence, inseparable from sacerdotalism, that it usurps the prerogatives of Christ, and invades the sacred and inalienable rights and liberties of the Christian people. It enthrones a mock Christ, or real Antichrist over the whole Church militant on earth; makes the priests supreme over the Christian laity, and a single Bishop supreme and absolute over the priests themselves; while the Church, placed under a pretended Viceroy and human High Priest, is severed from the authority and grace of the true and great High Priest who is passed into the heavens.

Let us now return from the false analogy, which leads to conclusions opposed to the direct evidence of the Apostolic writings, and fatal to the liberty of the Church of Christ and the revealed privilege of every true Christian, and see whether a view cannot be found which reconciles the language of the New Testament with the true and right interpretation of those laws and ordinances of the Jewish Church, to which the appeal has been made.

The Prophet is one whose office is to teach men the will of God. The King is one whose work is, by reward and punishment, to constrain men into obedience to the commands of God, enforcing only those which it is expedient and reasonable to enforce, and bearing for a time with the transgression of the rest. The Priest is one whose office is to lead the guilty into a state of nearness and reconciliation to God, or to raise those already reconciled and forgiven into closer fellowship and fuller communion. Man is ignorant, and needs Divine teaching. He is guilty, and needs Divine forgiveness and atonement. He is perverse and rebellious, and needs the wise exercise of Divine control.

Of these three ideas, the Kingly was unfolded chiefly in the times of David and Solomon, and the Prophetic in the days of the declining kingdom, and the return from captivity; but the Priestly was unfolded conspicuously on the first giving of the law, and in the very constitution of the Jewish people. The Old Testament was, fundamentally, a message of condemnation, written and engraven in stone by the finger of God, with the promise of a reconciliation afterwards to come. Its first main truth was man's distance from God and his need of recovery. On this converge the whole system of sacrifice, the giving of the law on Sinai, the structure of the tabernacle, and the veil of the most holy place, never withdrawn but once in the year on the day of atonement, and then to the high priest alone. The Priestly office has secondary duties to fulfil: it shared

in those of the King or ruler. The high priest was a ruler of the people. (Acts xxiii. 5.) It shared also in those of the Prophet; they were to show the people, "the sentence of judgment." (Deut. xvii. 9.) "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and thou shalt seek the law at his mouth." But still, the main work assigned it was that of sacrifice and atonement, the removal of the sinner's guilt, and the opening, so far as was then possible, of his access to a holy God.

Revelation of sin was the main object of the legal economy. The law entered, that the offence might abound. And hence all its details were adapted and designed to impress more deeply this solemn truth. Not one, but many walls of partition were raised, to teach their sinfulness, and that they were very far gone from original righteousness. By the choice of Israel for a peculiar people, a kingdom of priests, all the heathen were taught their real place as outcasts from God's covenant. By the choice of Levi, the other tribes had the same lesson taught a second time, of their distance and unholiness. The choice of the line of Aaron, and the double punishment of Dathan and Abiram, and of Korah, the Levite, revealed the same truth once more. It received a further exhibition, when one only of the priests was permitted, as high priest, to wear the ephod and priestly robes, or to enter within the second veil. And the crowning lesson of man's distance and guilt was when the high priest was permitted, once only, on the day of atonement, to draw near to God's presence,

and enter with sprinkled blood within the second veil; and that, as soon as he came out, and blessed the people, that sacred and mysterious dwelling-place of Jehovah was closed once more.

The Law of Moses was given to reveal to men their distance from God, and their need of sacrifice and restoration to the Divine favour. The Gospel proclaims a great and perfect sacrifice, and a way of access to God, newly opened to all mankind. Hence those features of the Mosaic Law which enforced the fact of man's distance and alienation from God, were now to be replaced by others of an opposite kind. The subjective reconciliation, it is true, would be limited and incomplete, and was to be realized slowly, in successive stages of the Divine economy. But the objective change was complete and entire. The casting away of Israel was the reconciling of the world. The middle wall of partition was broken down. The veil was now rent, and access given into the most holy place. And thus the office of the Church in its new organization was to exhibit nearness to God, not distance from Him, favour and not guilt, access to His presence freely given, and not successive barriers of holy separation. From this great change in its ideal purpose, it followed of course that its constitution, as compared with Israel under the Law, must assume a new and altered form.

How then does the New Testament deal with the successive degrees of priestly consecration embodied in the Law of Moses? There we have a five-fold gradation,—

the heathen, the Israelite, the Levite, the Priest, and the High Priest; and of these even the last was allowed to enter only once a year into the most holy place, under strict and rigorous conditions, and the forfeiture was death. But all these are now set aside, and melt into one. Our High Priest, by His own blood, has entered in once for all into the most holy place,—holier than the type,—into heaven itself, having obtained eternal redemption. All nations alike are invited into the Church of Christ. Believers of the Gentiles are numbered among the true Israel of God. And these Israelites are Levites: for "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him;" so joined, as to be "members of His body, His flesh, and His bones." These Levites are also "a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Nay, these priests, more privileged than those of the Law, share a right then restricted to the high priest alone. They have no share, indeed, in offering that great Sacrifice by which these wonderful changes are wrought; but still they have "boldness to enter into the most holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way," which He has consecrated for them through His death. The veil of the temple is now rent; and the kingdom of heaven, including the gift of a royal priesthood, is now freely set open to all believers.

The silence, then, of the New Testament on priestly orders and offices in the Church of Christ, distinct from the common privilege of all believers, is no mere

accident, no simple oversight. It grows directly out of the main and essential feature of the new economy. A priestly caste can only be set up within the Church at the price of one or other of two great evils. The first is a degradation of the Christian people, and a denial of their revealed calling and privilege as a holy priesthood. The second is greater still,—a blasphemous usurpation by sinful men of the prerogative given to the great High Priest alone, by a claim to continue or repeat the one great offering of atonement, which was finished once for all upon the cross, and admits of no repetition.

But does this exclusion from the Church of Christ of all priestly gradation involve the denial or rejection of order and office of every kind? Far from it. The principle of subordination is as strongly and plainly revealed as before; but it assumes a different shape, in harmony with the main purpose of the new dispensation. The common footing of acceptance, reconciliation, and nearness of access to God by faith, admits the largest varieties of knowledge, grace, and spiritual wisdom. Christians are children who need to be taught. They are sheep who need to be guarded from beasts of prey, and nourished in the green pastures and by the still waters of God's Holy Word. Hence all the new terms of office in the Christian Church centre on this one great work of preaching and teaching the Word of God. The Apostles rank first and highest, and their commission is given by Christ: "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Go ye into

all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." And St. Paul defines this, in contrast with the administration of sacraments, to be his appointed work: "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." "Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an Apostle, I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not, a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity." The "other Seventy" received a like commission. "Go thou and preach the kingdom of God." "Say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." The Prophets come next in order in the lists repeatedly given; and their very name shows their analogy with the prophets, not the priests, of the Old Testament. Next to these are Evangelists. The name is first given to Philip, the survivor of Stephen, and, after his death, foremost of the Seven. And the name implies their characteristic work, to publish and proclaim the Gospel of Christ. After these are mentioned "pastors and teachers," names that clearly define the office entrusted to the Christian clergy,—"to teach, premonish, feed, and provide for the Lord's family;" and to be "messengers, watchmen, and stewards of the Lord." The same view prevails in the three pastoral Epistles from first to last. The continuance of a Christian clergy, if we are to adopt that later and less appropriate term, is thus only defined: "The things which thou hast heard of me before many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to TEACH others also." The servant of God must be "apt to teach, patient." (2 Tim. ii. 24.) The character re-

quired in Bishops or Presbyters is that they be "apt to teach." (1 Tim iii. 2.) Their work is to "feed the Church of God," "the flock of Christ." (Acts xx. 28; 1 Peter v. 2.) The elders ordained by Titus were to be "able to exhort with sound doctrine." And the charge to the beloved Timothy is, "Preach the Word: be instant in season, out of season." "Take heed to thyself and the doctrine; continue in them." (1 Tim. iv. 16; 2 Tim. iv. 2, 3.)

The various offices, then, or orders of the Christian Church, have their nature doubly fixed, by the uniform language of the Apostles, and by the essential nature of the new covenant. They are unfoldings, not of the priestly, but the prophetic office. The ministers of Christ, from the highest to the lowest, are not priests, but evangelists. A proper priesthood within the Church can only be set up by usurping the rights of Christ, or falsifying the Gospel message, and denying the rights of the Christian people. The bloody sacrifices of the law have now ceased. The Great Sacrifice has been offered once for all, and admits of no repetition; the veil, which excludes sinful men from the Most Holy place, has been rent in twain, when the words, "It is finished," parted from the dying lips of the Son of God. Within the Church the priestly gradations of the law are annulled and set aside by the glorious message of reconciliation, the dignity of the Christian calling, and the fulness of privilege bestowed on every genuine believer in Christ. The converted heathen becomes an Israelite

indeed; the Israelite is also a Levite, joined to the Lord, and one spirit with Him in the mystical fellowship of the body of Christ; the Levite is a priest, appointed to offer spiritual sacrifices; and the spiritual priesthood are allowed, through the blood of the Great Atonement, more freely than even the high priest of old, to have access to the holiest, and enter within the veil before the mercy-seat by the blood of Christ.

And yet these Christians, though so highly privileged, in point of actual knowledge and experience may differ widely. All have much, and some have almost everything to learn. There are babes and infants, who have need of milk, and not of strong meat. They are like sheep and lambs, and need to be tended by wise and faithful shepherds. They are scholars, for whom pastors and teachers are provided by the care of the Great Prophet, the Good Shepherd, and need to be trained in the knowledge of the truth, to go on unto perfection, and to grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ. Their Christian fraternity is revealed in their common possession of a holy priesthood; and whoever interposes a human priest, in the proper sense of the name, between them and the risen High Priest, defrauds them of their Christian birthright. Their wide diversity in gifts, knowledge, and attainments is equally displayed in Divine varieties of the old prophetic office,—the gifts of the risen Saviour. There are sheep, and their shepherds or pastors; scholars, and instructors or teachers; babes, infants, young men, and elders, or fathers in Christ;

governments, helps, and diversities of administration,—completing by their variety the living growth and structure of the body of Christ.

It is easy to infer from the previous remarks the true source and secret origin of the sacerdotal theory. When the Church forgets its high calling, and includes largely within its communion hearts that are consciously unreconciled, who have not truly received the power of Christ's atoning sacrifice, but feel themselves still aliens and at a distance from God, the craving must arise for priestly intercessors, like those of heathen worship, or of Jews under the twilight of the old covenant. Faithless to its high calling, the Church with its rulers then strives to build anew what the Apostles had destroyed, and makes itself a transgressor. The shadows of the law are revived under altered forms. The sinner is taught to look on it as a vain presumption to come directly to Christ through His great sacrifice, and to know and believe the love that God has to him for Jesus' sake. He must pass through a laborious round of outward services, and accept the mediation of some human priest. Thus an imposing hierarchy is raised, to replace that of the elder covenant; and men are taught that through their services and mediation alone, perhaps even that through their offering up of Christ anew, and in no other way, there is true access to God. Such doctrines, because widely diffused, may style themselves Church principles or Catholic doctrines. They are really the marks of the long-foreseen and clearly-pre-

dicted apostasy from the true faith of Christ. To resist them, and cast them out as a poisonous corruption of the Gospel, our martyrs laid down their lives at the stake. And the time seems almost come when a new reformation will be required, to hinder them from regaining their fatal ascendancy once more in our own nation,—an ascendancy dishonourable to the virtue and efficacy of Christ's perfect and finished sacrifice, and fatal to the liberty and dangerous to the souls of Christian men.



Baptism.

BY THE

VERY REV. THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY.

IX.

BAPTISM.

WE are taught in the Church Catechism that two sacraments only are generally necessary to salvation,—that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Now of these common usage tells us that one is administered but once, and never repeated during the whole course of our lives, while the other is daily pressed upon us, and even the most lax and careless professors are yet unwilling to forego an occasional attendance at the Table of the Lord. And when we inquire the reason of this, we find that the one belongs to the entrance to the Christian life, and is the beginning and pledge of an effort and struggle just begun; while the other is for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls day by day, as we advance along that pathway to which by Baptism we were admitted. Just, therefore, as we are born but once into life, but need daily food and sustenance to maintain our bodily powers, so it is

with the higher life: we begin it but once, but need continual supplies of spiritual food to preserve our souls in health and vigour.

Baptism then is an act of consecration, a rite by which we devote ourselves to God's service, and enter into covenant with Him,—undertaking on our part to believe the Articles of the Christian faith, to renounce and struggle against sin, and to keep God's commandments; and God on His part covenants to give us all the blessings promised in the Gospel, conditionally upon our performance of what we on our side have undertaken to do.

Now most of the difficulties and mistakes made respecting Baptism would have been avoided had men always remembered this simple fact,—that it is an initiatory rite. Men have often spoken of this beginning as if it were the end of the Christian life. High as may be the hopes with which a gallant ship leaves her moorings to start upon a long and perilous voyage, yet many a storm has to be encountered and many a danger passed, before, with weather-beaten hull and torn cordage, and many a mark upon her of the rough weather she has encountered upon her course, she enters the wished-for port. And many a ship never enters it at all. The words of Holy Scripture tell us this too plainly of those that set forth upon the Christian voyage, for any to doubt that there is danger to every baptized soul of fatal shipwreck. "There be many called," says our Lord, and "few chosen;" "Many there are that seek to enter

heaven, but fail, because an entrance is given to those only who strive;" because even an ordinary amount of pains and exertion is not enough: "For the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."

There were in the Ark eight souls saved by water, and one was the accursed Ham. In Abraham's family two sons, and one only the child of promise: in Isaac's two, and one sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. Six hundred thousand men were baptized in the Red Sea and entered the wilderness of probation: two only passed through Jordan with Joshua into the land of possession. Holy Scripture is only too full of these warnings; for, finally, even among the Apostles there was a son of perdition, and a Demas among the friends of St. Paul. "Be not high-minded, but fear."

And yet with so much to admonish us that Baptism is but the first step and preparation for future conflict, we find even in early times such distorted views of its meaning and efficacy as made men defer it to their dying hour. Constantine the Great was no solitary example of this, but represented the current feeling of his days. Nor is the cause of this exaggeration far to seek. As Baptism was the beginning of the Christian life, it was often described in terms that belonged to the Christian life itself. The early believers, moreover, had mostly been converted from heathenism. To such Christianity was a region of purity and a haven of rest, in strange and blessed contrast with the coarse vices and the hope-

less scepticism of an age that had lost all real belief in God, and all regard for even the decencies of morality. At their Baptisms they were admitted to a society so pure and holy, to a hope so high, to a life so noble, that they could not find words strong enough to express the happiness of the change. Baptism was to them the dividing line between a hell from which they had escaped and a heaven begun upon earth; and naturally they spake of it in terms of hyperbole; and then,—by the common mistake which has so vitiated theology, of turning rhetoric into logic, and arguing from the warm and loving rhapsodies of earnest men as if they were the cold, hard facts of the reason,—they soon treated Baptism as if it were the end and crown of the believer's life, and deferred it till their death-beds, that they might enter paradise pure and clean from that Baptismal laver, in which all their sins had been washed away. Really this was to do away with the Christian life altogether. Instead of the Christian race, with men eagerly pressing forward and straining every nerve to reach the goal, and Christ waiting there to receive them and crown each as he arrived with the chaplet of immortality, they were to wait at the starting-point, that they might have upon them none of the dust and soils and stains of hard work and earnest endurance.

If we turn to the inspired history of the early Church we find all such mistakes carefully guarded against. When St. Peter preached his first sermon, and three thousand souls were added to the Church, they

were all baptized, because they were all beginners. (Acts ii. 41.) So at the end of this chapter the new converts are called, not "those that should be saved," but "men in process of salvation,"—men in whom the work had begun, but who, like Ananias and Sapphira, might end in perdition. So when Paul was converted, forthwith he was baptized. (Acts ix. 18.) It was the sign that he had begun the Christian course, but he counted not himself as yet to have attained to safety (Phil. iii. 12—14), nor to have escaped all danger of being finally a castaway. (1 Cor. ix. 27.) So when the first Gentile was converted Peter commanded him to be baptized (Acts x. 48), because the Holy Ghost that had fallen upon Cornelius and his friends was certain proof that God had admitted them to enter the lists for the Christian race, and Baptism was the outward sign that this was so. It was the acceptance of them by the Church, because they had been already accepted by the Church's Master; and on their part it was a solemn consecration of themselves to Christ's service. But the Apostles were not baptized. Several of them had probably received John's Baptism, but that was no admission to the Christian life. (Acts xix. 4.) It was a Baptism of repentance only for the remission of sins (Mark i. 4), and not a Baptism for a renewed life; and the Baptist himself acknowledged its inferiority. (Matt. iii. 11.) Had the ideas current in the fourth century been true, the Apostles would not have foregone so great a privilege. They did forego it, because to them it would have been

a going backward and not forward; for they had advanced beyond the baptismal stage, and reached something better. They had travelled too far along the pathway of life for their Master to take them back to its entrance. Not then as beginners, but as saints fully united to Him, He received them to Holy Communion that they might feed spiritually upon Him. And then after His resurrection He admitted them to the Apostleship, and gave them the Holy Ghost (John xx. 21—23), which fell upon them a second time at Pentecost, with special gifts to enable them to discharge the duties of their office.

These gifts were also often bestowed upon the converts, but are always distinguished from the effects of Baptism. In the case of Cornelius and his friends they preceded Baptism (Acts x. 44—46), and St. Peter's argument was that they who had received the greater gift could not be denied the less. There was a special reason for this precedence, because without it the rulers of the Church would have doubted whether Gentiles might be admitted to their communion on equal terms with the Jews. (Acts xi. 17, 18.) But ordinarily Baptism went first. "Repent," says St. Peter, "and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts ii. 38.) "When the Samaritans had been baptized by Philip, Peter and John went down to them, and prayed for them, and laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." (Acts viii. 15—17.) So when Paul had baptized twelve men at Ephesus, who

had received only John's Baptism, it was not till he had laid his hands on them that the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied. (Acts xix. 6.) We do not read of any special gift attending upon Philip's Baptism of the eunuch (Acts viii. 39), and yet there was that in Baptism which made him go on his way rejoicing. And so St. Paul tells the Corinthians that it was a rare matter for him to baptize any: his was a higher office as an Apostle,—even to preach the gospel (1 Cor. i. 14—17); and yet he magnifies Baptism when writing to the Romans, and shows wherein its blessedness consists.

What then is this blessedness? What is that aspect of Baptism which the Apostle magnified? His words are those familiar to us because they are repeated in our catechism; but repeated with the warning that the Apostle's words belong not to the outward form, but to the inward and spiritual grace. The real essence of Baptism is "a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness." "Are ye ignorant," says the Apostle, "that as many of us as have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? We have, therefore, been buried together with Him by Baptism into death; that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so should we also walk in newness of life." (Rom. vi. 3, 4.)

Now it would be impossible to state more strongly the distinctive idea of Baptism than by this metaphor of St. Paul. Never is there a more complete end of the

old than at death. We part then with all we have, leave those bound to us by the dearest ties; abandon our homes; cease from our old cares and occupations; resign all that once concerned us, and henceforward have neither rights nor duties. Never, too, is there a more thorough beginning than at birth. In the early Church, where they delighted to express by symbol ideas which had to them all the charm of novelty, it was usual, as our Church too enjoins unless there be special reason to the contrary, totally to immerse the person baptized; that by his being thus plunged beneath the water might be represented not merely his death but also his burial; and by his emerging therefrom, the being born again into a new and different existence.

But St. Paul's words not merely thus gave form to the symbolism of the Church, but also strongly affected its language. Let us cast a glance at the writings of the early Fathers, and we shall see that the idea thus stated by this great Apostle was very soon caught up and developed, till at last, by men not being careful to draw that distinction so wisely stated in our Church Catechism between the outward sign and the inward grace, the mere external form of Baptism became invested with attributes which made men regard it with superstitious awe. It ceased to be the commencement of a chequered course that might end in failure and rejection, and became a goal which implied acceptance without the necessity of running with patient earnestness the Christian race.

If we begin with the Epistle of Barnabas,—which though not written by the Apostle of that name, is yet so old as to be generally attributed to him by the Fathers,—we find all those passages referred to Baptism in which water is spoken of in the Old Testament. Thus when Isaiah says, "His waters are sure" (ch. xxxiii. 16), it is supposed to signify the certainty of Christ's acceptance of the baptized. So in Ps. i. 3, the word *tree* suggests Christ's cross, and the *rivers of water* baptism; and thus Barnabas paraphrases the verse, "Blessed are they, who placing their trust in the cross, have gone down into the water." And so finally quoting Ezek. xxxvii. 12, he says, "This meaneth that we indeed descend into the water full of sins and defilement, but come up bearing fruit in our heart, having the fear (of God) and trust in Jesus in our spirit." (Bar. c. xi.) It is right, however, to add that this, the most precise of all the expressions of Barnabas as implying the forgiveness of sins at Baptism, is not found in the Codex Sinaiticus; which has at last given us a complete text of this epistle, and which is in date by far the earliest manuscript containing it.

In his vision of the shepherd, Hermas sees a tower built upon the waters, which is explained of the Church; and it is thus built "because your life has been and will be saved through water." (Pastor Her. I., iii. 3.)

Justin Martyr identifies Baptism with regeneration; saying in his first Apology, that "those who are persuaded and believe are instructed to pray to God for the

remission of past sins; and then after fasting are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated." (Ch. 61.) It is noteworthy in this passage that Justin makes the forgiveness of sins to precede Baptism, and to be the effect of prayer; while Baptism is regeneration, the beginning and entrance into another life. So, too, in his Dialogue with Trypho, he says "that the Baptism which Isaiah predicted is alone able to purify those who have repented, and is the water of life." (Ch. 14.) But on turning back to the previous chapter, we find that this "laver of repentance" is the blood of Christ,—for the passage which he quotes in proof of this purifying virtue of Baptism is Isaiah liii. 5, 6, 11; and that he reproaches the Jews for understanding their Scriptures carnally and not spiritually. Again in ch. 53, comparing Baptism and circumcision, he says that "we have received not carnal but spiritual circumcision through Baptism."

In the opening of Tertullian's Treatise on Baptism, we find a most curious passage. As is well known, our Lord was often called the Fish, because the letters of this word in Greek are the initials of Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour. Tertullian therefore calls Christians little fishes: saying, "But we little fishes, after the example of our Fish, Jesus Christ, are born in water, nor have we safety in any other way than by ever abiding in water." The last clause, if applied to the rite of Baptism, would mean that we are saved by remaining at

the gate, and not entering "the narrow path that *leadeth* unto life;" but more probably water here means the Holy Ghost. (See John vii. 38, 39.) As was to be expected in one infected with Montanism, he expounds the words of 1 Cor. vi. 11: "And such were some of you: but ye have received ablution," etc., as implying that there was no forgiveness for sins after Baptism. Sins previously committed were to be put on the "paid side" of the account; but as there was no second ablution, sins subsequent to Baptism could not be forgiven. The fallacy is, of course, evident. "Sin," he argues, "can be forgiven at Baptism; therefore it cannot be forgiven in any other way." The purifying effects of Christ's blood are thus tied down to one ordinance; the merits of His death are limited in such a way as to make Christianity a religion of formalism. No wonder that such teaching caused men in the next century to defer Baptism to their dying hour, that so they might enter heaven not because their holy lives had given proof of their living union with Christ by faith, but because they had taken the first step and given a pledge to live as Christians. But in an earlier and better Treatise,—that on the Resurrection of the Flesh (ch. 48), he says, "It is not the soul which is sanctified by the washing (of Baptism); its sanctification comes from the answer." (See 1 Peter iii. 21.) The passage he was commenting upon is 1 Cor. xv. 29, which he explains of men being baptized vicariously in the name of their dead friends. Now such an act, he argues, could not

benefit their souls: for, as St. Peter says, there must be the answer of a good conscience to prove the reality of the recipient's faith, before the soul could be sanctified. He seems therefore to mean that Baptism reaches only to the body, and that the object of this vicarious baptism was to ensure the resurrection of the bodies of those in whose names men were baptized. Apparently he did not believe in the resurrection of the bodies of the un-baptized.

The value of Tertullian consists, however, rather in his antiquity than in the soundness of his opinions. But even if we turn to Irenaeus, we find him ascribing a corporeal effect to Baptism, while the soul is reached only by the Holy Ghost: "It is," he says, "the Holy Ghost who joins us to God. Just as bread cannot be made from dry flour, so we cannot be compacted into union with Christ without the water from heaven (which is the Holy Ghost). And this happens to the body at Baptism; but to the soul through the Spirit. Wherefore both are necessary,—both Baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost, because both contribute to a life with God." (*Iren. adv Haer*, iii. 17, 2.) According therefore to both these Fathers, the resurrection of the body was the effect of Baptism. And in his treatise on Baptism Tertullian gives the reason why it confers immortality, thus: "Death is abolished through the washing away of sins, because when the guilt is taken away the punishment is taken away likewise." (Ch. 5.) Even Gregory of Nyssa teaches that without the laver of re-

generation no one can attain to the resurrection. (Orat. Cat., 100 c.) His more usual teaching however is, that it is the soul which at Baptism receives the seed of a new life, to be in it the pledge of immortality and of the resurrection; but as its union with the body infects it with the stains of sin, so it needs, for the maintenance of its union with Christ, to be nourished by His body and blood in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Now omitting the consideration of opinions relating to the resurrection and other matters not directly connected with the subject, it is plain that these early Fathers paved the way for the errors of future times by drawing no such distinction as that drawn in our Catechism, between what is external and what is real in the sacrament. There is the germ of it in what Tertullian says about "the answer," but usually the symbol was with them identical with that which it signified, and little danger perhaps was there in those days of men being believers in form only. Persecution and obloquy kept the Church pure from lukewarm and nominal believers. Strange views were often held, and manifold were the heresies of those early times; but men were in earnest, and few came to Baptism who were not heartily prepared to obey and suffer for the new faith; but their teaching was inexact and unsettled. Baptism was constantly confounded with that Christian life of which it was the pledge; and men spake as if it was itself the realization of all the gifts and graces that could be attained to by a holy life. Potentially, of

course, the beginning does contain the end, but the Fathers often spake as if it did so in act. Far different was St. Paul's feeling: he counted all things behind him as nothing, and looked only onward. No past privilege or blessing was remembered. His whole energies were directed to reaching forth unto those things which were before. (Phil. iii. 13.)

It was St. Augustine who first drew the sharp distinction between the Sacrament as an outward sign and the *res sacramenti*, its real and inward essence. Not indeed that he doubted that the believer received a very real blessing at Baptism, but it was when outward form and spiritual grace were combined. As is well known this Father, to whom we chiefly owe the dogmatic theology of the west, held that there was no salvation out of the Church, and finally limited it to the elect. And so he taught that without Baptism and the Supper of the Lord no one could be saved. (*De Pecc. Remis.* i. 24, sec. 34.) But he carefully distinguished between the outward washing, which is a *Sacramentum* only, *i.e.*, a sign or symbol; and calls it *corporaliter adhibita sanctificatio*; and the realization of it in the heart, effected only by the Spirit, and which he describes as a spiritual sanctification. (*De Bapt.* iv. 23, sec. 30.)

Now it is from this Father that the teaching of our Church is chiefly taken, though our Reformers were careful not to press too strongly his peculiar opinions. Thus the word *generally* is added in the answer to the first question upon the sacraments, to guard against the

error that salvation was impossible without them. Accept the doctrine of predestination and there would be no difficulty, because all predestined to be saved would also be predestined to be baptized. But at this our Church hesitates. It will not follow St. Augustine so far; but it accepts heartily the distinction between the *sacramentum*,—*i.e.*, the sign,—and the *res sacramenti*,—its reality. And we must remember that in translating St. Augustine, the exact words may not give the exact sense. He calls Baptism "the sacrament of regeneration," and "the sacrament of the remission of sins" (*De Bapt.* i. 11, sec. 16, v. 21, sec. 29); but Latin was his native tongue, and *sacramentum* in his days in the language of the Church meant a sign, or more exactly a chief sign.

When subsequently our Church speaks of the *res sacramenti* in Baptism as "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace," it is simply quoting the language of St. Paul (Rom. vi. 4); yet with this proviso,—that we must not attribute this grace to the mere outward form. It is only when the person baptized possesses the two essential requisites of repentance and faith, that the sign becomes the pledge also of the thing signified; and the soul is cleansed by that which alone can really cleanse: I mean, the blood of Christ.

Now it is much to be regretted that while our Church is so careful in her language in the Catechism, in which

she speaks dogmatically, men nevertheless should attempt on the one side to make the expressions in the Baptismal Service mean more than the Catechism sanctions; and on the other hand should grieve at words used there, because if not thus limited they might seem to go beyond her dogmatic teaching. The services of our Church were intended for a select body of believers living under a careful discipline. Consequently they are often pitched in too high a key for common use. But as a national Church we have thus to use them; yet not by the will of the Church, but by the will of the nation: for the Act of Uniformity is the work of Parliament. Without the rigid clauses of this Act we should not be bound to use in all cases just the same words. And yet if we are always to use the same words, I would rather use words pitched too high, like those in the Baptismal Service and that for the Burial of the Dead, than words pitched too low, like much in the Marriage Service. The two former, at all events, show how precious is the privilege of being in covenant with God, what care there should be to train up the young as members of Christ, and how great is the blessedness of the dead in Christ.

In the office for the Baptism of adults there is, I suppose, little difficulty. No clergyman ought to be so lax as to baptize one who has not given such proofs of his repentance and faith as justify the sincere and earnest belief that Baptism will be the beginning to him of a renewed life. And this is the meaning of the word

regeneration. It is a metaphor suggesting that we have now new family ties and relationships,—that God is now our Father, the Church our home, the children of God our brethren. But we must remember that Baptism admits us to God's family on earth, and not into His family in heaven. The baptized are His children, but children in a land far away from their true home (Heb. xi. 14—16); and they have a long and weary journey before them, and many a peril to encounter before the mansions are reached which Christ has gone before to prepare for them, and the portals of their abiding city safely passed. And so our Church teaches. Its most exact words are those which it uses when it receives the person baptized into the fold. And how does it there describe God's family? "We receive," it says, "this person into the congregation of Christ's flock:" that is to say, into His visible Church, "and do sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner, against sin, the world, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end."

Plainly, therefore, it teaches that Baptism is the girding on of the Christian armour for a hard struggle against a threefold enemy. Rightly it assumes that there is a sincere wish to maintain that struggle, nay, even that it has already begun: for it is the business of the visible Church to recognise and seal by external acts that only which already exists; and very properly, therefore, it

uses language which implies its belief in the reality of the repentence and faith of the person baptized. The Church would stand self-condemned if it admitted to Christ's sacraments any who were plainly destitute of the necessary requisites. But if on man's part there be the *res sacramenti*, so certainly it will not be wanting on God's part; and whatever gift of grace, therefore, and strengthening of the spiritual life, accompanies the outward form of the sacrament to the worthy receiver, that grace the Church devoutly believes will be in each case vouchsafed, because it would be a mockery to confer the sign where plainly the reality does not exist.

But if any from this imagine that the Church looks upon the baptized as therefore sure of salvation, the very act of signing them with the cross corrects the error; for by it she declares that she enrols them into her ranks for battle,—sure of victory if their faith fail not, sure of defeat if faith be wanting. And she rejoices in every new warrior whom she enlists for Christ's army, and trusts and prays that he will gain the victory; but the very words of her prayer—that they "may *continue* soldiers"—sound the note of alarm. Prayer is needed lest they should not so continue, but become faint-hearted combatants, or even desert from Christ's banner; and, therefore, too, it is that she requires sponsors even for adults, and urges these to put the newly-baptized in mind of the "solemn vow, promise, and profession" they have made in their presence: a *vow* that has to be kept, a *promise* that has to be fulfilled, a

profession that has to be maintained. Except that it recognises the baptized as members now of Christ's family, children no longer of wrath, but of God, with a right therefore to all Christian privileges as long as the baptismal vows are unbroken, and the certainty that the Holy Spirit will aid them in every endeavour to follow the example of their Saviour Christ, our Church's Service is one of obligation for the future, even if it be an obligation brightened and irradiated with Christian hope.

In infant Baptism there is this difficulty,—that there can be no personal faith or repentence in the baptized. There is indeed no active obstacle, but passiveness is not enough to entitle any to Christian privileges. But there being ground from the Scriptures and ancient practice for infant Baptism, the question is in what way this personal defect may be remedied. In our Church it is remedied by the "confession of the mouth necessary to salvation" (Rom. x. 10) being made by the sponsors. And thus infant Baptism becomes doubly conditional: all Baptism is conditional, as being a covenant, and as such involving mutual obligations; but in infant Baptism the admission itself to this covenant is also conditional. The public profession of faith, which is an essential condition of Baptism and the sole justification of the Church in granting it, is made by proxy. But in due time that profession must be made in person, and this is done at Confirmation. I do not know that such a profession is any necessary

part of Confirmation, but our Service addresses itself to those who were baptized as infants, not to those who received Baptism as adults, and requires them in their own persons to ratify and confirm that promise and vow made then in their name, that so the defect inherent in infant Baptism may be done away. Whoever with faith unfeigned makes this solemn profession, enters fully into all the privileges of the covenant. Whoever through want of faith neglects to make it, his privileges are in abeyance, except so far as that he is still outwardly a member of Christ's flock, and is addressed as one who as far as profession goes is a Christian.

But the rite itself may in no wise be repeated; for by it he passed through the door, and there is nothing but his own want of faith to hinder him from walking along the path. He is enlisted in Christ's army, his armour is ready; all that is needed is that he have the will to put it on. He has had the name of God called over him, and to God he belongs.

I cannot conclude without very briefly referring to that parable of our Lord which seems to have been especially spoken with reference to those who after entering into covenant with God fall into open and notorious sin. "The prodigal son," says St. Chrysostom, "sets before us the representation of those who fall after Baptism." (De Poen. Hom. i. 4.) We see in it a son dwelling in his father's house. He asks his share of the inheritance, and it is granted him; but he departs "gathering all together:" leaving as it seemed

nothing in his home, utterly abandoning all his rights and privileges there, and so wanders into a far country, where he indulges to the very utmost in sin. Yet even in his fall he is not a citizen of that country; and no sooner does he come to himself than his first thought is of "his father." He contrasts his misery with the plenty enjoyed by "the hired servants of his father," and determines to "arise and go to his father," and on his arrival he "will say unto him, Father." In his deepest humiliation,—when the utmost he dared hope was to be as a hired servant,—the dear name of father was perpetually on his lips and in his heart. There is no thought of sin after Baptism being a barrier to acceptance; no thought that one of the citizens of that far country would be received more lovingly than himself: on the contrary he feels himself the nearer to God because he had been baptized. He had been a son: he is a son still, though far from home, in squalid misery, serving as a base swineherd in a country of which Satan is lord and master.

And because he was a son returning home his father goes out to meet him when yet a great way off, and welcomes him with touching tenderness. He gives him the kiss of reconciliation, not on hard conditions but at once, almost unasked, and his baptismal privileges—the robe and ring—are restored to him; the former being the imputation of Christ's merits and righteousness for his justification, while the ring suggests the sealing by the Spirit of God granted him once again for his

sanctification. As long as there is such a parable in the Bible, so long those who have sinned after entering the covenant need not despair of acceptance, nor doubt that their Baptism entitles them to pray "Our Father which art in heaven," with the certainty of acceptance as soon as faith and repentance are present in their hearts.

And thus, then, Baptism is the act of consecration, whereby we dedicate ourselves to God's service. It is an initiatory rite, whereby God's blessing is pledged to us when we pledge ourselves to Him: it is an enlisting on His side. For *sacramentum* also means a military oath,—the act of enrolment in His army, whereby He becomes the Captain of our salvation. It is the admission into God's family, not as slaves but as sons; and thanks be to His mercy, for those who break their vows and desert from their Leader and abandon their Father's house, there is ready acceptance if only they repent. If as sons they return, thinking of their Father's goodness and love, while yet they are a great way off He will go forth to meet them,—will fall on their necks and welcome them back with joy, as sons who were dead and are alive again; who were lost and are found.

The Lord's Supper.

BY THE

REV. DR. BLAKENEY.



X.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

IN the exposition of the doctrine of our Church on the Lord's Supper, it may be well, at the outset, to place some of her dogmatic statements in juxtaposition with those of the Church of Rome. The following extracts relate to Corporal Presence, Transubstantiation, and the Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Church of England.

"It is hereby declared, that thereby (by kneeling) no adoration is intended or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental bread or wine there bodily received, or unto any Corporal Presence of Christ's natural flesh and blood. For the Sacramental bread and wine remain still in their very natural substances, and therefore may not be adored (for that were idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians); and the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one." (*Post-Communion Rubric.*)

The Church of Rome.

"If any one shall deny that the body and blood, *together* with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore *whole* Christ, are truly, really, and substantially contained in the Sacrament of the most holy Eucharist, and shall say that He is in it only as in a sign, or in a figure, or virtually, let him be accursed." (*Council of Trent, Canon* 1.)

The Church of England.	*The Church of Rome.*
"The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped." *(Twenty-eighth Article.)*	"If any one shall say that Christ, the only begotten Son of God, is not to be adored in the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist, with the open worship of *Latria*, and therefore not to be venerated with any peculiar festal celebrity, nor to be solemnly carried about in processions according to the praiseworthy and universal rites and customs of the Holy Church, and that He is not to be publicly set before the people to be adored, and that His adorers are idolaters, let him be accursed." *(Canon 6.)*
"The Body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper *only after a heavenly and spiritual manner;* and the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith." *(Ibid.)*	"If any one saith that Christ, given in the Eucharist, *is eaten, spiritually only*, and not also sacramentally and really, let him be accursed." (*Session* xiii., *Canon* 8.)
"The offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifices of Masses, in the which it was commonly said that *the Priest did offer Christ* for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, were blasphemous fables, and dangerous deceits." *(Thirty-first Article.)*	"If any one saith that by those words, 'Do this for the commemoration of Me' (Luke xxii. 19); Christ did not institute the Apostles priests, or did not ordain that *they and other priests should offer His own body and blood*, let him be accursed." (*Sessions* xxii., *Canon* 2.)

I add to the above another canon of the Council of Trent, which has an important bearing upon the subject: "If any one denieth that, in the venerable Sacrament of the Eucharist, *the whole Christ* is contained under *each*

species, and under every part of each species when separated, let him be accursed."[a]

The Church of Rome holds that entire Christ is contained in each kind by what is called concomitance, and which is thus explained by the Catechism of the Council of Trent:—

"But because His body, blood, soul, and divinity, are joined together, all these will be also in the Sacrament,—not indeed by virtue of consecration, but as those things that are joined with His body. And these things are said to be in the Sacrament by concomitance." *(On the Euch.)*

The above extracts show that on all these important points,—(1) Corporal Presence, (2) Transubstantiation, (3) Eucharistic Adoration, and (4) the Sacrifice of the Mass,—the two Churches are diametrically opposed. The Canons of Trent on the three former points were passed in October, 1551. The Post-Communion Rubric of the Church of England was added to the Prayer-book in October, 1552; and the forty-two Articles were published in 1553. The Canon on the Mass was passed by the Council of Trent in September, 1562. The thirty-first Article was published in its *original* form in 1553; but it underwent an important alteration in 1562-3. The Council of Trent, in 1562, denounced an anathema against any one who asserted that "by the Sacrifice of the Mass a basphemy is cast upon the most holy Sacrifice of Christ." But in defiance of this, the word "blasphemous" was introduced as descriptive of the Mass.

[a] Sess. xiii., Can. 3.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER AS ORIGINALLY INSTITUTED.

Much of the controversy which has so long agitated the Churches on this subject would soon come to an end if we all, laying aside our prepossessions, were content to accept this holy ordinance as it was instituted and left to the Church by the Master, "in the same night in which He was betrayed." Let us place ourselves in imagination at the paschal feast, which the disciples had "made ready" as Jesus had appointed them. Our Lord and His Apostles are now taking part in the Passover, the great national commemoration of the redemption from Egypt, when the Lord "passed over" the first-born of Israel. The *Passover* had itself taken place ages before, and yet the feast is designated by the Lord Jesus as *the Passover:* "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke xxii. 15); because it was the representation or commemoration thereof. "And as they were eating Jesus took bread," (Matt. xxvi.), "and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take eat: this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me." "After the same manner also He took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup *is the New Testament* in my blood: this do ye, as often as ye drink, in remembrance of Me." (1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.) No one imagines that the cup *is* actually the New Testament, or covenant. Here is a double figure of speech: the cup is put for the

wine, and the wine for the blood, and it is "passing strange" how any one could have conceived that the Lord, when He said "This is my body which is broken for you," meant that He took His own body, and gave Himself, body and blood, together with His soul and divinity, or "whole Christ," to His disciples, to be received into their mouths. The law of God, given before Moses (Gen. ix. 4), and re-published by the Apostles (Acts xv. 29), strictly forbade the eating of flesh "with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof," an injunction Patriarchal, Mosaical, and Apostolical, and plainly opposed to the doctrine of the Corporal Presence. The disciples hearing the words, "This cup *is* the New Testament in my blood," could not have supposed that the cup which they were about to take was literally the covenant, or that they were now to drink actually of the blood of their Master contrary to the Divine Law.

THE MEDIÆVAL VIEW NOT ACCORDING TO LITERAL INTERPRETATION.

The advocates of this monstrous opinion of Corporal Presence assert that it is according to the obvious and literal interpretation of Christ's words; but a little consideration serves to dissipate the delusion. Those who are not acquainted with the subtleties of Romish casuistry may be surprised to find that the word "*this*," in the sentence, "This is my body which is broken for you," has been the occasion of much difficulty to the

advocates of the Corporal Presence. The hearer of Christ, or reader of the sacred narrative, would not hesitate to understand that when Jesus "took *bread*" and gave it to His disciples, saying, "This is my body which is broken for you," He referred by the word "*this*" to the bread which He took in His hands. But the advocates of the Corporal Presence stumble at this first word. Dens refers to the fact as follows:—

"The pronoun *this* can be understood in a double sense; either substantively, and the sense of the proposition will be,—*This, which I deliver unto you under these veils, is my body;* or, it can be taken adjectively, and be referred to 'my body;' and thus the sense will be *contained under these species of bread, in the end of the utterance, is my body;* or, according to others, *this body is my body.*" [b]

Bellarmine says:—

"It cannot be that the proposition should be true in which the subject stands for bread, and the predicate for the body of Christ; for bread and the body of Christ are most different things." [c]

Further, Christ did not say of the bread, "This contains my body, together with my blood and soul and divinity;" nor did He say of the wine, "This contains my blood, together with my body and soul and divinity:" but He said simply of the one, "This is my body which is broken for you;" and of the other, "This is the New Testament in my blood." Interpreted literally, the

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[b] "Moral Theol.," p. 275, tom v., Dub. 1832.

[c] "De Euch," lib. iii., c. 19.

bread relates to the body, and no more; and so, also, the wine, or cup, relates to His blood, and that alone. To teach that the bread contains "whole Christ," and the wine also "whole Christ," is entirely unwarranted by the text. But how then is the bread, the body of Christ, broken; and the wine, the New Testament in His blood, or His blood, shed? I answer that they are so now as they were when Christ uttered the words. But Christ's body had not then been actually broken, nor His blood actually shed, so that, as a matter of fact, the disciples did not partake of the body as actually broken, nor of the wine as actually shed. And thus it is now: Christ's blood is not now shed, for "Death hath no more dominion over Him." (Rom. vi. 9.) We *retrospectively* feed, as the Apostles prospectively fed, on the body of Christ *broken, and blood shed.*

Dr. Vogan challenged Dr. Pusey[d] to show that his doctrine of the actual presence of "whole Christ," or "Christ Himself," in the elements, is in accordance with the letter of Christ's words which are categorical propositions, having, as Archdeacon Wilberforce observed, a subject, a predicate, and a copula. The subject is the bread, or the cup,—"This cup;" the predicate is, "my body which is given for you," or "the New Testament," or "my blood which is shed for you;" the word *is* constitutes the copula. Dr. Vogan truly remarks that "the exact and rigidly literal interpretation" of "Christ's

[d] "Letter to Archdeacon Denison and Dr. Pusey." Longmans, 1874.

words" "must be capable of being thrown into strictly equivalent propositions, having a subject, a copula, and a predicate, each and all of them expressing no more and no less than our Lord's words:"—

"There must be the same subjects, or else different things would be spoken of; there must be the same or exactly equivalent copulas, or else a different relation would be expressed; and there must be the same or exactly equivalent predicates, or else different things would be spoken of the subjects. Such must be the strictly literal interpretation; and no interpretation can be literal which does not fulfil these conditions."

Dr. Vogan shows that his opponents cannot express their doctrine in propositions, the subject, the copula, and the predicate of which are the exact equivalents of our Lord's words. He gives an illustration of this in the following tabular form. (We supply the numbers):—

(1)	This	is . . .	my body which is given for you.
(2)	This	has under its form the real presence of	my glorified body.
(3)	This	is . . .	my blood which is shed for you.
(4)	This	has under its form the real presence of	my glorified body.

Nos. 1 and 3 are the words of our Lord. Nos. 2 and 4 are the statements of the Ritualistic and Romish *corporalist* doctrine. It is evident at once that number

2 is not equivalent, in its copula and predicate, to number 1, and the same observation applies to number 4 as it regards number 3. But Dr. Vogan, as I have said, has brought the matter to a practical issue. He addressed a courteous letter to Dr. Pusey, in which he quoted the propositions of our Lord, and invited the Doctor to express his own views in categorical propositions like them. He submitted to him the following form, leaving a space to be filled up by Dr. Pusey :—

Our Lord then said :—
This is my body which is given for you.
Dr. Pusey :—This
Our Lord said :—
This is my blood which is shed for you.
Dr. Pusey :—This

Dr. Vogan courteously invited Dr. Pusey to supply the words in which he would express his doctrine. Dr. Pusey *declined!* Dr. Vogan, in 1873, addressed a letter to Archdeacon Denison in reference to the petition of the 483, inviting him to express his doctrine in categorical propositions equivalent to those of our Lord. Archdeacon Denison courteously declined! Dr. Vogan wrote again to Dr. Pusey, who again declined to enter into controversy, although, as has been truly said, Dr. Pusey "has done more than any man in England to provoke controversy!"

"He who chooses the world for his audience gives every one a right to question him before the world upon anything which he has published to it. And if one may thus

question an author publicly and in print, he has a right to question him privately, and in writing; and if his questions be put with due regard to Christian courtesy, he has a right to expect an answer, or a sufficient reason to be given why no answer is sent to the questions."

The truth is that Dr. Pusey could not answer the inquiry put to him so fairly by Dr. Vogan.

The doctrine of the Corporal Presence, or "whole Christ," the God-man, in the elements, involves that of concomitance referred to above, in reference to which Jewel rightly says :—

"Now, touching this new fantasy of *concomitantia*: after they had once devised a new religion, it was necessary, for aid of the same, to devise also new words. Whereas Christ saith, 'This is my body,' they say, 'This is my body *and* my blood;' where Christ saith 'This is my blood," they say, "This is my blood and my body;' and in either part they say is whole Christ, God and man."*

The Roman Missal is itself, in some respects, older than the mediæval doctrine of Corporal Presence and concomitance. It gives no support to the notion that "whole Christ" is in the elements; but, on the contrary, refers to the body and blood of Christ separately. Concomitance and transubstantiation are the outcome of a slowly developed superstition.

PRIMITIVE PRACTICE.

Before I pass on, I desire to notice the fact that in the early Church the Sacrament of the Communion was

* "Controversy with Hard," p. 534.

administered at *a feast*, which speaks more decisively against the mediæval dogma than volumes of argumentation.

There is a most striking testimony to this in the notes of the Douay Bible, which, in reference to 1 Cor. xi. 20, says, "*The Lord's Supper.* So the Apostle here calls the *charity-feasts* observed by the primitive Christians, and reprehends the abuses of the Corinthians on these occasions, which were the more criminal because these feasts were accompanied with the celebrating the Eucharistic sacrifice and sacrament."

But as time rolled on, and superstition advanced, the simple communion of Christians became an elaborate ceremonial; a fast was substituted for a feast, and the Council of Carthage, A.D. 397, formally decreed that the Sacrament of the altar should not be celebrated unless after a fast.[f] Error at length reached its climax in the doctrine of transubstantiation; and we need not wonder, therefore, that the Council of Constance, while acknowledging that in the primitive Church this Sacrament was received by the faithful in both kinds, forbade the cup to the laity. The admitted novelty of half-communion is a proof of the novelty of the dogma upon which it is founded,—that whole Christ is contained in each species. On mediæval principles "whole Christ" is received in the bread, and "whole Christ," again, in the cup: if this be so, it seems improper to administer or to receive

[f] Labbe's Councils, p. 963, vol. i. Paris, 1714.

in both. But the primitive Church confessedly kept this ordinance as it was instituted by Christ, which is an evidence of the fact that it did not accept the doctrine of concomitance, or that "whole Christ" is in both kinds. The well-known picture of Leonardo Da Vinci is a striking witness to the simplicity of the first Communion. The artist was a member of the Church of Rome, but when he came to represent the facts of the first Supper, he was compelled to depict our Lord at the table with His disciples distributing the bread and wine without ornate ritual. The mediæval doctrine which has been stereotyped by the Church of Rome in the Council of Trent, and which finds advocates in our own Church, is an illustration of the wonders which time works. The gorgeous Mass of Romanism or Ritualism is so great a perversion of the simple Communion of primitive Christians, that if the Apostles were now to rise from their ashes, and to witness its celebration, they would not recognise it as that Communion which they kept when they met together to "break bread."

GRADUAL RETURN TO SCRIPTURAL VIEWS.

The fourth Council of Lateran, in 1215, gave its sanction to the doctrine of the Corporal Presence and transubstantiation, but it was not until the Council of Trent that the dogma of the Sacrifice of the Mass was finally settled. This Council enlarged upon the decrees of its Lateran predecessor as it regards Corporal Presence, and closed some questions as to the Mass, which seem to

have been left open until then. At the Reformation, the Church of England gradually put aside the doctrinal and ritual systems which had grown up in the lapse of ages. The forty-two Articles were published in 1553; in their composition the reformers had had before them the Canons of Trent on the Eucharist, decreed in 1551. The second Prayer-book, that of 1552, was in harmony with the advanced views of the reformers, who consistently put aside the vestments of the Mass when they rejected the Mass itself. The black rubric was inserted in the Prayer-book by order of Council in October, 1552; and while the word "altar" was obliterated as the rubrical designation of the table, an important rubric was added directing the table to be placed in the body of the church or chancel.

In 1559 Queen Elizabeth gave some indications of a desire to restore altars, but the reformers addressed a faithful remonstrance to her, which was successful in its design. It is true that a portion of the twenty-ninth Article (now the twenty-eighth), which was substantially the same as the black rubric, was omitted in 1562, but the words substituted for them were in flat contradiction to the Council of Trent, as it appears in the parallel columns at the head of this paper. Moreover, the twenty-ninth Article, which sets forth that the wicked "eat not the body of Christ," and which is no less forcible against the Corporal Presence than the omitted portion, was first introduced in 1562. This new Article gave great offence to men of Lutheran views. Bishop

Chenery refused to subscribe to it, and Bishop Geste protested strongly against it. The twenty-ninth Article, with our black rubric which was restored in 1662, are our great bulwarks, not only against Romish but Lutheran views of the Lord's Supper. The change which was made in the latter, at the last revision, of the words "any real and essential presence thereby," into "any Corporal Presence," was an improvement; for while it obviated the well-worn taunt of the Romanists that the Church of England denuded the Sacrament of all that was real and essential,—a taunt to which the Anabaptists and Socinians alone were open,—it precisely contradicts the mediæval dogma of the Corporal Presence, or the presence of the body *(corpus)* in the elements. The grounds upon which the rubric rejects such a presence remain now as they were in 1552: namely, that "the natural body and blood of Christ are in heaven and *not here*." The restoration of this rubric in 1662 gave great offence to the Duke of York and the Romanists.[g] This rubric states the reason of kneeling: "for a signification of our humble and grateful acknowledgment *of the benefits of Christ* therein given to all worthy receivers." This is very plain; we kneel not to adore Christ Himself in the elements, a view which is expressly rejected as above, but for the reason assigned above, and which we now repeat: namely, "an acknow-

[g] On the subject of the changes which were effected in the various revisions, see Dr. Stephen's invaluable argument before the Privy Council in the Bennett Case. Rivingtons: London.

ledgment of the benefits of Christ therein given to all worthy receivers."

THE BENEFITS OF CHRIST GIVEN TO ALL WORTHY RECEIVERS.

It is, therefore, not actually "Christ Himself," or Christ in His body and blood together with His soul and divinity, which is given to the mouth; but "the benefits of Christ" which are given to all worthy receivers.

This leads me now to notice that much misunderstood and misrepresented portion in our Catechism, wherein, in answer to the question, "What is the inward part or thing signified?" the reply is given, "The body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." The portion of the Catechism which relates to the Sacraments was added in 1604, as the result of the Hampton Court Conference: the Puritans did not object to it, but, on the contrary, their successors, in 1661, observed that "the doctrine of the Sacraments, which was added upon the Conference at Hampton Court, is much more fully and particularly delivered than the other parts of the Catechism, in short answers *fitted* to the memories of children."[h] They suggested enlarged expositions of the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Command-

[h] Cardwell "Hist. Conf.," p. 327.

ments. The Romish and Ritualistic[1] answer would be, that "Christ Himself," or "whole Christ," is the inward part. But not so the Catechism. It refers to the blood separately from the body, "the body and blood of Christ," and employs the plural "*are*" to denote two things. The Church of England, further, in the Catechism, and in all her references to this subject, refers to "the body *and* blood of Christ." We pray that we may "so eat his flesh *and* drink His blood, that," etc. The two kinds are given separately; of one, it is said, "take and *eat* this;" and of the other, "*drink* this." But the word drink is improperly applied to the blood if it is received by concomitance in the bread. And, moreover, to receive "Christ Himself," first in the bread and again in the cup, is not consistent. The Church of Rome withholds the cup from the laity, but allows the priest to partake of it, in which the incongruity still remains! Why not withdraw the cup altogether if "Christ Himself" is given in the bread? The truth is that the doctrine of the hypostatic presence, by concomitance, or the presence of "Christ Himself," "whole Christ," in the elements (which, by the by, is placed beyond the pale of the Church's teaching by the Bennett Judgment, in its quotation from Bishop Bull), is a perfect novelty. The late Dean Goode devotes a section of

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[1] The twenty-one declarants assert that "Christ *Himself* really and truly, but spiritually and ineffably present in the Sacrament, is therein to be adored." (See Second Ritual Report.)

his able work on the Eucharist to prove the following proposition :—

"The Fathers tell us that in the Eucharist the body of Christ is present as dead, and his blood as *shed* upon the cross, and that we eat and drink them as such; and they cannot be really and substantially present in this form, as they do not now exist in it."

Similar also is the teaching of our own great Reformed divines. Of the Reformers, I quote from Ridley, as an example. He says:—

"I being fully by God's Word thereunto persuaded, confess Christ's natural body to be in the Sacrament indeed, *by spirit and grace*, because that whosoever receiveth worthily that bread and wine, receiveth effectuously Christ's body and drinketh His blood: *that is, he is made effectually partaker of His passion.*[1]

It is remarkable that Heylin, in his life of Laud, gives the first part of this quotation, but leaves out the explanation which is so opposed to the mediæval doctrine!

Dr. Waterland,—quoting the words of the Catechism. "The body and blood of Christ, which are verily and indeed taken and received of the faithful in the Lord's Supper,—says, "That is, they have a real part and portion given them in *the death and sufferings* of the Lord Jesus .... they truly and indeed partake of the virtue of His bloody sacrifice." (Page 186.) Bishop Andrewes says, "If an host could be turned into Him, now glori-

[1] Works, p. 274. P.S.

fied as He is, it would not serve: Christ offered is it. Thither we must look; to the serpent lift up. Thither we must repair, even *ad cadaver*. We must *hoc facere* (do that *is then done*): so, and no otherwise, is this *epulare* to be conceived." [k]

Bishop Barlow, in 1601, published a treatise on this subject, in which he says,—

"And so that speech of St. Augustine is true; we have Him here in *pabulo*, as He was in *patibulo (torn and rent)*: as Himself ordained the Sacrament in *pane fracto*, not *integro* (the bread broken, not the whole loaf); thereby signifying, yea saying, that in doing it we must remember Him not as living among us, but *as dying* for us: *ut in cruce, non in cœlo* (as He was crucified, not as He was glorified). Whereby we conclude, first (for His presence), that His body is so far forth there '*quatenus editur*' (as it is eaten); but His body is eaten as dead and slain; so Himself hath appointed it,—'This is my body;' and stayeth not there,[l] but adds withal, 'which is given for you.' And His blood is drunk not as remaining in His veins, but as shed." [m]

This statement is very important, and may be regarded as a *contemporaneous* exposition. I might quote from other writers at great length, but this is unnecessary. It is manifest, according to the obvious and literal interpretation, that the bread relates to the body

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[k] Sermons, p. 454. Oxford.

[l] It is remarkable that Dr. Pusey and others quoting the words of institution, stop at the word "body."

[m] "Barlow's Defence," p. 124.

alone, and the wine to the blood alone,—the body as broken and the blood as shed. But the body was not actually broken, nor the blood shed, at the last Supper. The breaking of the body and the shedding of the blood actually took place on the cross. The body is not now broken; the blood is not now shed: Christ is glorified. As Bishop Andrewes shows, we must go back in faith to the cross to feed on the body broken and the blood shed; or as Archbishop Secker, in his Catechism says, in reference to the word of institution, "But he could not mean literally; for as yet His body was not broken, nor His blood shed, nor is either of them in that condition now" [n] (*in loco*). Mediævalists assert that the body given in the elements is the glorified body; but this is not only contrary to the words of institution,—"*broken* for you," "*shed* for you,"—but to fact; for Christ's body was not glorified at the last Supper.

Dr. Pusey and others assert that the body and blood of Christ "must be there (in the elements) in order that we may receive them." [o] Dr. Vogan rightly observes that "this savours very strongly of Rationalism." The sacramental feeding is a spiritual act: we "feed on Him in our hearts *by faith* with *thanksgiving*." As Bishop Andrewes observes, "By the incomprehensible power of His eternal Spirit, not He alone, but He as at *the very*

[n] See quotations to the same effect from Hammond, Burnet, Tillotson, etc., in Garbett's valuable work, entitled, "Voices of the Church of England."

[o] Presence, p. 22.

act of His offering is made present to us, and we incorporate into His *death* and invested in the benefits of *it* (*ut supra*)." The Church of Rome has led the way in Rationalism by her transubstantiation theories and false philosophy. But even she admits that "great benefits" of the Sacrament may be "*spiritually*" enjoyed without a participation even in the elements. The Catechism of the Council of Trent says that there are three ways of taking this Sacrament: (1) some receive the Sacrament only, (2) some spiritually only, (3) and some both sacramentally and spiritually. As to the second way it says, "But others are said to receive the Eucharist spiritually only, and they are those who being kindled with a lively faith, which works by love, eat that heavenly bread *in desire and wish* which is offered them, from whence though they get not all the fruits of the Eucharist, yet without doubt they have those which are very great."

CONCLUSION.

What Christ gave to His disciples at the last supper He gives now: to affirm the opposite would be plainly repugnant to facts. But Christ did not give His glorified person to His disciples at the last supper, as the Mediævalists say, for He was not yet glorified: it follows, therefore, that He does not give His glorified person now.

His body was not broken nor His blood shed at the last supper; but His body as broken and His blood

as shed, as Cranmer says, "be truly and indeed present, by *their mighty and sanctifying power, virtue, and grace, in all them that worthily receive the same.*" [n]

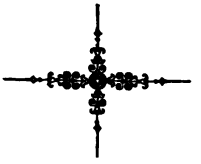
It is in this sense that the body was given before it was broken, and the blood before it was shed, and it is in this sense that they are now given, for the body is not now actually broken nor the blood shed.

Christ did not actually offer His glorified body in the Last Supper, for He was not yet glorified; nor did He offer His body in death, for He had not yet died.

The Holy Communion is a sacrament, and not properly a sacrifice.

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[n] "Answer to Gardiner, Prof."



Worship.

BY THE

REV. J. RICHARDSON, M.A.

XI.

WORSHIP.

IT is a peculiar feature of the times in which we live that so much attention is given to things which concern worship. The air is full of religious opinions, controversies, services, efforts, experiences; and men are freely handling, and curiously questioning, and wonderingly asking what these things mean. And if men's ideas of worship were sound, this fact would be in itself a sign of much good that has been done amongst us; for real worship is the fruitage of faith, the outcome and expression of the life of God in the soul. But many men continue worldly while they talk and think about these better things. The age has not always grown more reverent by becoming more interested; and so it may be well to set out afresh the old subject,—as to what Worship is, why, and how, and by whom it is really offered in the presence of Him who will not judge according to the appearance, but according to the "hidden man of the heart."

And as we study this question in the light of the Gospel statements of it, we are arrested by the phraseology employed: how the words used to state it practically explain and settle it. Thus the devotion of an animal towards its master (*προσκυνεῖν*) represents the consciousness of distance between the Creator's glory and the creature's dependence upon Him. And memory tells us how Elijah "cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees." (1 Kings xviii. 42.) The attitude of a servant is indicated by another expression (*δουλέυειν*), and we think of the Psalmist's service: "As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until He have mercy upon us." (Ps. cxxiii. 2.) There is worship in waiting:—

"They also serve who only stand and wait."

The habit of mind out of which it comes is indicated by the veneration (*ἐυσέβεια*) which the most favoured children must ever feel towards God their Father.

The attitude of body in which its true humility is expressed will be seen by the Apostle's expression, "I bow my knees;" and the elevation and expectancy of a soaring faith will be gathered from that other account, "I will that men pray everywhere, *lifting up holy hands*, without wrath and doubting."

So, again, the catholic comprehensiveness of worship will appear, not only from the representation of angels

and spirits made perfect in the upper and inner courts of the one great sanctuary, but chiefly from that grand account of it, by which we know that worshippers are limited to no place and no condition, for our own blessed Lord has told us, "The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him."

There may be words without worship, and there may be worship without words; and, perhaps, the very highest act of earthly worship is that in which a holy joy and an all-absorbing admiration and an all-entrancing love have so flooded the soul that praise cannot flow out in speech. Thus when the heart has opened all its secrets before God's eye of grace and tenderness, or has laid bare its wants and its weaknesses in the felt presence of Him who knows all, the very silence of the appeal constitutes its sublimity, and the unspoken supplications are felt to be those which most eloquently set forth what the soul would have and would believe that God will give. The measure of a true prayer's force is the power by which it is presented. To have conceived the idea clearly which we mean to bring before God, and to have clothed it in words fitting and sufficient for its right and reverent expression, is but the lower part of that blessed process by which saints hold fellowship with heaven. To put the petition in, to lay it down before the mercy seat, to stand by it with heart faith, and know that it must be heard and answered,—this is

the energy of Worship, faith's upper work of sitting with Jesus in the heavenlies. Now concerning worship, —that real service which redeemed souls render by virtue of their union with Jesus and the consequence of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, "whereby we cry Abba Father,"—one thing is quite clear.

I. *It cannot be done by deputy.* In words, this truth may be accepted by all; and yet there may be some doubt, if in reality it be not much forgotten. Thus, in our modern times, it has been often said that the highest act of worship is in the Supper of the Lord. And it *is* a holy and happy service when we follow the express command of Christ, and come to Him in this simple ordinance, in which the soul feeds upon Him as the body on the bread and wine. But by whom is that worship offered? Is it by minister or by people? If it be said by minister, then error has crept in, even upon this holiest subject, and we must stand apart and say that in such misapprehension we can have no share. Put the distinction of this worship upon the ground of offering Christ to the Father, make its dignity to come out of the dignity of Him who is offered, and out of the ministerial authority of him who offers, and you do but endorse an error, and encourage a mistake, out of which in every age of the Church mischief has been found to come. Every communicant can do and must do what only is to be done in that holy ordinance. No priest can minister for the people, that is, in their

name or in their place. The very idea that the celebrant is doing on earth what Jesus does in heaven, is founded on a mistake as to what Jesus does. He is our Advocate, Mediator, Intercessor, and High Priest, but He now presents no sacrifice. That He did below, and "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." Now He claims for His people, and conveys to all who are in living union with Him, the full effects and the guaranteed blessings, which His own one offering upon the cross secured; and minister and people, in the holy ordinance, stand on the common ground of the equal worship, and at the common level of felt inability to present anything but themselves, their souls and bodies, their service and their praise, acceptable unto the Father only in virtue of the acceptance of the Son. Make the Holy Communion spectacular, make it some service of the minister at which the people are only or mainly to assist, make it a sacrifice, however qualified and fenced by explanations which reach the ear but touch not the heart, and you will degrade your worship. Without intending it, without acknowledging it, without even rightly understanding it, men do practically put this worship into the priestly hands; and that is to corrupt the ordinance, misplace the celebrant, and make the people lowered and not raised in their communion worship.

Call this sacramental service the highest form of Christian worship, then dwarf and cripple this by making it the service of an official order, and the consequence

is sure to be that through all the secondary and subordinate engagements of it, worship must be lowered, chilled, dulled, degraded, having the form of godliness without its power.

II. *It must not be overladen with ceremonies.* It would be an interesting inquiry, which each man may set up in his own conscience, as to how much in his worship goes to please himself and how much is offered to honour and glorify God. We hear of hearty services, warm services, and we may well ask whom are they designed to gratify,—God or man? So long as we are in the flesh our worship must accord with our double character, and in it both soul and body, heart and head and hand may join. But here, as in every other service, the material must ever be kept in due subordination to the spiritual; and if by reason of the beauty of a ceremonial, or the thrilling ecstasy of an accompaniment, we find as a matter of fact that the language of the soul is unheard and the prostration of the heart is unfelt, then, and in precise proportion to the degree in which the mechanical outstrips the spiritual, have we fallen, and not risen in the service we so tender unto the Lord. This is, in truth, the test over all the departments of religion. If the preacher forgets his Master and exalts himself, if the pastor seeks the favour of the flock and not the honour of its Owner, if the steward looks askance to his own gain when all ought to be concentrated upon that which makes his charge more worthy of the

Master's praise,—in any and all of these conditions of service there is a grievous blemish and a dangerous deceit. It comes to a worship of self instead of the worship of the Almighty. Under such circumstances there may be abject confession of sin in attitudes of deep humiliation and language of penitent pathos; but the heart may be dead and the conscience hard all the while. To the fleshly ear, the tones of praise may thrill and quiver, so that tears flow and lips tremble and hands are locked, and enjoyment seems exquisite and complete. Yet in all this God may be neglected, and gratitude towards Him may fail.

This may be, of course, only an abuse of that which may in itself be good; but if experience shall show that the emotional does and will keep down the devotional,—that worship in its palmy days has not been in its purest forms,—then cautious men will at least make very solemn inquiry, not about others so much as from themselves, whether the fact may or may not be that under the gorgeous externals the inner warmth has not escaped.

And this is a question to be well considered, above the reach of parties, and away from the strife of tongues. Worship is the heritage of the universal Church, and the study of it is to be drawn from the whole tenour of the Gospel history. All would be lifted up, if worship were placed in its own higher and holier region. All will be brought nearer in the household of faith, if they all get closer to the Father's footstool. And so it

is with facts and not with feelings, with effects and not with speculations, that we are dealing here. Clearly, worship falls when the slovenliness of irreverence and neglect has made its surroundings and accompaniments such as we should be ashamed of in the presence of a parent or a King. For all such disregard of the proprieties, wise men can have no defence. But mischief may be found in extremes on either hand. The requirements of an æsthetic worship, elaborate ceremonials, elevated musical appliances, may bring in,—and, as facts prove, often must bring in,—elements that are not of spiritual and really Christian sort. There may be performers and observers,—exquisitely trained utterances from the tongue which send a tremor over the frame,—and attracted ears and fixed eyes, because the beauties are all present which the natural man enjoys. But, oh, if the spirituality has ceased,—if the great God shall see "devotion's every grace, except the heart!"—then the great design and purpose have been missed. Better far a simplicity under which devotion thrives, better far an unlettered reality of heart-praise and love, than a cultivated refinement which goes no deeper than the surface, and has no higher action than on matter and on man. The whole energy of the universal Church may well be directed to this one question,—how to keep the subtle element of that holy fragrance which ever will rise with acceptance before our God, and yet not to throw away the alabaster box in which it may be held, and with which it should be

ever associated, when grateful love pours out its offering in the Saviour's presence.

And if practical examination shall indeed find out that the form is displacing the spirit of our worship, then it becomes the Church's obvious duty to say that even when the sacrifice is painful, we cast out the wheat to save the ship; we return to simplicity of manner, because we cannot part with the sincerity of expression which the heart and not the body gives. In every part of worship there must be reality, individuality, spirituality; and the flame must come down from heaven, or the savour of the sacrifice will be offensive and not acceptable before God.

And now we may turn to a third aspect in which the question of Worship may be viewed.

III. *It must not be divorced from a holy intelligence and a sanctified common sense.* Every highest branch of praise should be traceable to a hidden root of faith; and when men soar into the upper regions of enjoyment, they should never lose consciousness that all is reasonable and safe and true. There are certain times and circumstances under which an excitement has risen which is neither healthful nor trustworthy. As when devotion becomes dependent upon some creature who calls it forth, and so rises or falls, flashes or flickers, according to the presence or absence of something which is not God. No doubt we are and must be affected, while we are in the flesh, by things which are painful or pleasing

to flesh and blood; but the devotion which the Holy Ghost creates will live and glow by its own inherent grace. If the building shoots up high above, it must have its foundation deeply and solidly laid before you can reckon that it will stand. It is easy to indulge in overwrought imaginations; it is common to find out what another has felt, and then imitate its every expression except that one which explains it all. The Church has often suffered from spasmodic excitement; but it never can be injured by a sobered, solid, Scriptural enjoyment of God's favour. The electric flash may be followed by the tempest rain; but the river which really makes glad the city of God, and that leaves a green mark all along the valley of human existence, is that which gurgles ever out from beneath the throne in heaven, and quietly, deeply, richly yields its water to fill the pools and freshen all the plants as it go downwards to its rest and its perfection in the ocean of goodness, out of which it had evaporated as grace.

Religion is eminently a reasonable service; and worship, which is the highest expression of religion, is a product of the Spirit and of the understanding also. A man should think before he prays, that he may be well prepared so to ask as not to ask amiss; and a man should remember before he praises, inasmuch as there will never be a real acknowledgment, if there has not been a real appreciation of the blessings given. Upon the whole subject, therefore, we may arrive at these conclusions:—

First,—that Christian worship must be raised into

the higher region in which its holiest services are to be centred; out of the region of supplication, blessed and bright as that always is, it must be lifted up into the loftier sphere of praise; and so, as selfish considerations recede and grateful emotions are fostered, the soul becomes conscious of a service which rises into an adoring homage, and becomes eloquent in an admiring praise.

And further, Christian worship must spread over a wider area. It will be not less a thing in which individuals rejoice, because it is also a thing in which multitudes can join; and so instead of the worship of a faithful few, we must long to see and contrive to secure the worship of the rejoicing many. The closet prayers will lead on to the sanctuary praises; and Church after Church, country after country, catching the grand idea of the universal family and citizenship and priesthood of the redeemed, the waiting people will be pleading together before the central throne. Then like a corona of glory the burning Churches shall be grouped round Him who is the common sun, and the sound of the many hearts sending up their concordant praise will swell out with a pathos and a power at which even a drowsy world must wake.

So, too, with the right expression in which the homage of soul shall be made known. There will be the old words of love and truth and joy; but also the language of the life, and the testimony of the service will show how all is genuine and sincere. Men who wait are worshipping, while they mark the very first tokens of

the Father's will. Men who watch are worshipping, as they hold their silent and it may be solitary station, while the city is asleep; for they look from their towers and know that the Eye that never sleeps is upon them still. Men who work are worshipping; for they are remembering God, representing God, respecting God, while the highways of the busy world are full of the crowding masses of careless men. And men who war are worshipping; for they stand as the servants of the great King, and trust in the well-tempered armour, and wield well the tried weapons of truth; and they are heroes who never flinch, God's own host who follow wherever their Captain leads, and their's is the homage of a holy zeal and the devotion of deathless love,—the martial music of an army of the saints who have no fear.

Confession and Absolution.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM HARRISON, M.A.



XII.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION.

THE acts which are represented by these two terms constitute the ethical foundation of the restoration and worship of a sinner. Without them there can be no peace with God, and until they are fulfilled there can be no acceptable worship in His sight. The truths which they comprehend and the state which they indicate lie, therefore, at the very threshold of salvation; the substance of them is assumed in every religion and embodied in every creed, whether Jewish, Christian, or heathen. To have sinned is to need propitiation, an act of which these names are the practical expression and issue. It is unnecessary for us to point out how all this is confirmed in the ceremonial law and in the Gospel. They are parts, moreover, of one and the same thing, since the one must precede the other and can be of no avail without it, while the latter is the complement of the former.

There can be no controversy, therefore, between Christians on this general issue. Our differences begin only

when we come to the question of mediation, and here must be our point of departure. All Christians believe in the propitiation of sin by the satisfaction of the death of Christ,—all confess the palmary article of the forgiveness of sins; but some profess themselves unable to realize or even to accept this latter fact, except through the special intervention of a human medium. Hence arises the very grave, and to every uneasy conscience momentous question: "Has God deputed to His Church any sacerdotal or ministerial medium through and by which the confession of sin may be made by the sinner, and the sinner receive absolution?" Nor, again, will there be any difference of opinion among all Christians, of whatever communion, that the confession of sin is primarily and principally due to God alone, and that offences against the second table are offences in the first place against Him; nor, further, will they dispute the fact that to Him alone it appertaineth to forgive sins. Assuming these preliminary statements as admitted truths therefore, let us endeavour to ascertain how far the human element of mediation is possible, and how far the Church of England recognises it. In doing this we shall arrive at the real sentiments of the Evangelical body concerning these disputed elements of our worship.

Confession of sin, according to the requirements of the Gospel, embodies the following four particulars,—namely, an unreserved acknowledgment and specification of sin; a craving for pardon and restoration; an honest re-

nunciation of the evil; and an appeal, through faith, to the promised mercy of God through the satisfaction of the death of Christ. The absence or defect of any one of these particulars destroys the value of the others, and vitiates the confession itself. There is, therefore, in the very nature of this transaction a secret condition which takes it out of the region of human cognizance, and consequently of any absolution which is other than precatory or conditional. This was the point seized upon by Luther in his "Treatise on the Keys." In the second chapter he introduces a dialogue between himself and a Romish priest:—

"Priest. He who has confessed his sins and done penance doubtless becomes absolved. We give absolution; but whether it be for you, that we leave to your consideration; for we cannot by any means find out how far your repentance is sincere: accordingly, we are uncertain whether the (loosing) key has applied or failed. It can easily fail.

"L. Now am I thoroughly convinced that the key, in company with your absolution, is unsupported by the Word of the Almighty. I am to depend upon my penitence and my contrition, and not upon your key. If I am deeply humbled and do penance, then the key helps me to absolution; if not, all is lost, both absolution and money which I gave for it. But how can I be certain that I have rightly repented and that God is satisfied?

"P. This I leave to your consideration: this I cannot know.

"L. Again. What is it you give us in annual confession, which you have unmercifully forced upon the world, and which has cost us our bodies and souls, property and honour, without intermission?

"P. What must we give you? Absolution.

"L. Is it then quite sure?

"P. Be you contrite, and our absolution stands registered in heaven: you are most assuredly pardoned. But if you are not contrite, then you are not absolved: for the key may err.

"L. I hear it for the second time that the key depends upon my contrition and worthiness before the Almighty. This is all very fine. But how am I to ascertain that my contrition and amendment are sufficient in the Divine judgment?

"P. I leave that to your consideration."

There is much more to the same purpose on the various points in which the power of the keys is exercised by the Church of Rome, the upshot of all which is that the state of the penitent's heart being known only to God, the absolution of the priest can be only conditional.

The late Mr. Hobart Seymour also says:—

"I asked 'whether the absolution by the priest had any efficacy in case the confessing person did not really and from the heart repent?' He replied, with some earnestness, that 'in such a case the absolution was null and void.'" 'The Confessional,' p. 27, 28.

It will be seen from hence that the *certainty* of absolution, dependent as it is upon the actual embodiment of the four particulars above mentioned, is after all to be referred to the truth and faith of the penitent; and the oft repeated answer of Luther's "priest" is the only one that can be returned by any human medium

whatsoever: "That must be left to your consideration." Hence it is that no sentence upon the part of any such medium can be other than conditional.

But surely there is yet a previous question to be settled as to the obligation to confess at all. The Romanists have as usual tortured and misinterpreted sundry passages of Scripture; but they even have never yet succeeded in showing that confession is to be made to a human medium. "Confess your faults one to another" does not mean "Confess to a priest," but that the man who has sinned against his neighbour is to go and tell him "I repent." And ingenious as the casuistry may be which turns the inquiry of a burdened conscience, as suggested by our Communion Exhortation, into a sacramental confession, it approaches so near to something like "deceitful handling" of a natural and plain method for obtaining counsel and relief, that I forbear to give it its true name.

Indeed, the two Exhortations themselves cut away the ground from under those who magnify sins after baptism into offences that either cannot be *certainly* purged, or can be purged only by human mediation and subjective penance, since the first exhorts even the blasphemer and the adulterer to repent, that so they may come holy and clean to the Holy Table, and the second appeals to grievous sinners to repent and amend, and be "partakers of this holy Communion."

But what is absolution? It is not the forgiveness of sins, but the declaration that sin is already forgiven

by Him to whom alone it appertaineth to forgive. The reality of the absolution therefore is dependent upon His previous pardon, of which it conveys only the assurance; but the pardon itself depends upon the actual faith and repentance of the individual who confesses. How far then does the Church of England recognise the human element of mediation, either in requiring confession or pronouncing absolution? That she requires public confession on the part of all who worship in her communion, and provides also a conditional and declaratory absolution for them, it is unnecessary to state. The only instance in which she deals with the individual, and the only special confession which she admits (and for which of course no form can be appointed), is that for which a conditional provision is made in her Office for the Visitation of the Sick. The following analysis of this Office in respect of the matters of confession and absolution is submitted to the candid consideration of the reader.

In the first place, it is *conditional.* "Here shall the sick person be moved to make a special confession of his sins, *if he feel his conscience troubled with any weighty matter.*" Where it must be noted that the examination and exhortation to confess are exceptional. For although the minister is directed to "examine whether he repent him truly of his sins," etc., etc., this examination (in the absence of any actual information) is optional,—namely, as the minister "shall see cause," and can only be, except on the foregoing reason, in *general* terms.

If, in the course of such questions the minister happens to find that the sick person's conscience is troubled with any weighty matter, it is then his duty to move him to make a special confession in order to afford him that compassionate relief which he needs.

In the second place, it is *voluntary*, for the sick person can even then decline to confess.

In the third place, it is to be made *in the presence of others*, for the whole service (in harmony with all the occasional services of our Church) is arranged for united prayer.

Thus then while we have in the formularies of our Church three separate confessions: two of them in a specified form, and the third optional and conditional,—not one of them is required to be private. Indeed, the words which formerly included private confession in the Rubric before this absolution,—namely, "the same form shall be used in all private confessions," were expunged in the second Prayer-book, in 1552. More than this: while the first two are directed to God alone, the other is an acknowledgment to the Church of sins against the body, of which the minister, as his representative, at his earnest request absolves him. This the Collect immediately following intimates; for the priest is directed to pray (and this, although he has absolved the sick person): "Open Thine eye of mercy upon this Thy servant who most earnestly desireth pardon and forgiveness, and, as he putteth his full trust only in Thy mercy, impute not unto him his former sins."

I have said that the confession of the sick person is concerned with offences against the Church. This was the opinion of the Royal Commissioners at the Savoy Conference; for when the objectors required that the Form of Absolution in the Office for the Sick should be amended, so as to make it conditional, they replied :—

"The Form of Absolution in the Liturgy is more agreeable to the Scriptures than that which they desire: it being said in John xx., 'Whosesoever sins ye remit they are remitted;' not, 'whosesoever sins you *pronounce* remitted.' And *the condition need not to be expressed, being always necessarily understood.*"

In other words the Absolution in the Visitation Office comprehended, in the opinion of the Commissioners, such offences only as the Church is competent to deal with,—namely, offences against itself.

But if it be objected that "the weighty matter" which burdens the sick person's conscience may possibly relate to offences against the first table, it will still remain, and even with more force, that the absolution is conditional; for it will be observed that the preamble of this absolution is the same in principle with that of the daily service. In both the ministerial commission is formally and statutably declared. In other words, the preamble in the Visitation Office declares that a *conditional* power to absolve has been left to "*the Church,*" of whom the minister is *pro tanto* the mouthpiece: a notable distinction, which points, as I submit, to the *character* of the offences which burden the sick

person's conscience. Yet, even upon the admission that the minister is here exercising his commission in matters pertaining to the first table, it will follow that the authoritative words "I absolve thee," cannot exceed the latitude of the commission itself, which is here specially limited "to all sinners who truly repent and believe;" otherwise the two consecutive sentences would involve a theological contradiction. Further still, there must have been some reason for varying the opening formula of this absolution. For whereas in the daily service the words run, "Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc.; in the Visitation Office the preamble commences, "Our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath left power to His Church," etc. Why this? If it be not that in this case the absolution is intended to deal with offences against the body of which He is the Authoritative Head, and His name is thus specially proclaimed to certify the sick person: *e.g.*, "To whom ye forgive anything I forgive also; for if I forgive it, for your sakes forgive I it in the person of Christ."

As to the necessity of absolution, it is a question which no wounded conscience (and who that has examined himself by the law of God has not felt its reproach?) can dispute. For unless, and until, the sinner is assured of the Divine forgiveness he cannot know peace; and ought not, if he could. Hence the propriety of the daily-repeated second collect at evening prayer, as well as that of the twenty-first Sunday after Trinity. But what is to assure him? Is it the voice

or dictum of a minister? Doubtless; provided he is commissioned with an express message, as Nathan was sent to David. But where is the minister who would venture to assume such a commission? unless we except the solitary priest who issues indulgences and fulminates damnation because he claims infallibility.[a] There is but one source out of which the Divine and healing touch can come, the Word of God. Hence the appropriate statement in the former of the two exhortations before the Holy Communion, which tells the penitent that "by the ministry of God's Holy Word he may receive the benefit of absolution." Hence also that further statement in the second part of the sermon on Repentance in the Homilies:—

"Let us use that kind of confession that God doth command in His Word; and then doubtless, as He is faithful and righteous, He will forgive us our sins, and then make us clean from all wickedness. I do not say but that if any do find themselves troubled in conscience, they may repair to their learned curate or pastor, *or to some other godly man*, and show the trouble and doubt of their conscience to them, that they may receive at their hand *the*

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[a] Hooker's statement in Bk. vi. 1, on the comparison between the authorization of Nathan and that of Christ's ministers, must be itself compared with what he goes on to say in sections 3 and 5, as well as with the extracts given in this paper. The latter is general, not special, and, as he guards it, cannot "signify any other than only to pronounce of sinners according to that which may be gathered by outward signs; because really to effect the removal or continuance of sin in the soul of any offender is no priestly act, but a work which far exceedeth their ability."

comfortable salve of God's Word; but it is against the true Christian liberty that any man should be bound to the numbering of his sins."

And what is this ministry and salve of God's Word but that clear array of precious promises scattered so profusely in both Testaments, but with greater precision in the New Testament, and summed up in that declaration of St. John, that "if we (truly) confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins"? This is the salve which the discreet minister, or other godly man, is to apply to the relief of the burdened conscience; and there is none other. The Lord's Supper, itself, or the most authoritative absolution must depend upon this Word for its assuring efficacy, because it is the foundation of all that we believe.

Yet, after all, there remains the personal act of faith, without which no declaration, on the part even of the minister, can bring peace to the troubled conscience. For until the promise is appropriated the peace cannot enter, and the trembling sinner is like one parched with thirst who refuses the cup presented to him. And here it is where the real difficulty for the most part lies. But for this slowness and reluctance to believe all that Christ and His Apostles have spoken, men would rarely need the extraneous help of a third person to determine their state before God. The simple declarations in the public services, and at the Holy Communion, would be sufficient, and the truly penitent would be filled with all joy and peace in believing; and sooner or later, if

ever peace is to come at all, this must be the way to realize it. Nor can it be impressed too frequently upon the minds of those who are burdened with the sense of guilt that the assurance of the minister can convey no more certainty than that of the Word of God, since his authorization to absolve is nothing more than the application of its promises. On the other hand, faith alone can appropriate the promise of pardon; and the same faith which leads the penitent to seek and accept it at the mouth of man, would, if exercised towards God, bring a more real assurance, because the very dependence upon the second cause shows a defect in the simplicity and energy of faith.

To revert, therefore, to the special question, let us ask what mediation the Church of England recognises in the matter of absolution. There are but three forms provided in her Liturgy, each one of which is to be pronounced by the officiating minister. Two of these are declaratory and general; one is precatory, judicial, and special. It is of this last only that we need to speak. Now as the confession of the sick person is optional, and the absolution therefore only occasional, and is then supplemented by prayer for Divine pardon, it is evident that it contemplates offences against the body. For as absolution can only be conditional, or precatory, in relation to the Divine forgiveness, and is here partly judicial in form, and expressly in the name of the head of the Church, it can only comprehend such offences as the Church can deal with. Whereas, therefore, the

minister, speaking in the name of God for the absolution of sins committed against His Divine Majesty, pronounces in a conditional sense, so here he speaks, first, in the name of Christ as the head of the body (and as such the final judge) in a *precatory* form; and then, in the name of the Church, in an absolute and judicial one: *e.g.*, "Our Lord Jesus Christ forgive thee, and by His authority I absolve thee." It is evident from this that the communion of the sick person with the Church had been interrupted by those special sins which troubled him, since the officiating minister calls upon those present to pray that he may be continued in the unity of the Church. But there is more. This service concludes with a precatory exhortation, of which the aim and substance is, that by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ alone the sick person can obtain health and salvation. Why this, if not to direct the eye of the sick man to Christ alone? For it should not escape our notice that the Confession and Absolution of this service are parenthetical, because they are optional and occasional, whereas this is the regular closing portion of it. Now what is the rationale of these several absolutions? Is there any member of the Church of England who would venture to say that the absolution of any sinner is dependent upon the mediation of the minister? This were to neutralize the very essence of absolution, which is a declaration and confirmation of a pardon already bestowed. Very different was the opinion of Hooker:—

"We (of the Church of England) labour to instruct men in such sort that every soul which is wounded by sin may learn the way *how to cure itself;* they (the Romanists), clean contrary, would make all sores seem incurable unless the priests have a hand in it."

Again:—

"Shall absolution be a cause producing and working that effect *which is always brought forth without it,* and had *before absolution be thought of?* But when they, which are thus *beforehand pardoned of God,* shall come to be also assoiled of the priest, I would know what force his absolution hath in this case?

"Therefore, the further we wade the better we see it still appear that the priest doth never in absolution, no, *not so much as by way of service and ministry,* really, either forgive them, take away the uncleanness, or remove the punishments of sin; but if the party penitent doth come contrite he hath by their own grant absolution *before* absolution."

With this agrees the Romish Professor before mentioned. For when Mr. Seymour inquired whether it was not a revealed fact that the repentant sinner had the forgiveness of Jesus Christ promised to him, and given to him as soon as he repented of his sin? he answered, without any hesitation, that such was his belief. In saying which he did but agree with the Council of Trent, and Bellarmine, who speak to the same effect.

But let us hear what Dr. Marshall, who published a work (reprinted in the Anglo-Catholic Library) on

the "Penitential Discipline of the Primitive Church," in 1714, says:—

"In her Office for the Visitation of the Sick, she hath indeed the indicative form, 'I absolve thee,' for the penitent's absolution; perhaps, in compassion to the great distress she supposed the penitent to be under, she might judge an extraordinary measure of comfort the fitter to be then applied to him.

"In the Office just cited our Church hath used both the forms, the one introductory to the other; the optative is first used: 'Our Lord Jesus Christ, of His great mercy, forgive thee,' etc. And then follows the indicative: 'By His authority I absolve thee,' etc. So that in the one a pardon is begged for the penitent, and in the other applied to him.

"It looks as if our Church intended by this indicative form only the restoration of the penitent to her peace and communion, inasmuch as in the prayer subjoined to it a request is specially made that God would continue this sick member in the unity of the Church."

I hesitate to enlarge this paper with further quotations. But I must add one from Jeremy Taylor, whom no one will suspect of wishing to diminish ecclesiastical authority. In his treatise on "Ecclesiastical Penance" he avows two things; firstly, "that in the primitive Church there was no such thing as a judicial absolution of sins, used in any liturgy or church;" secondly, "that the absolution of sins, which in the later forms and usages of the Church is introduced, can be nothing but declarative," to which he adds, "if we would speak properly, and as things are in their own nature and

institution, this declarative absolution is only an act of preaching." At the same time it is difficult to reconcile his view of the office for the sick *in this particular*, with other of his statements, nor can I assent to his gradation of the three confessions and their corresponding absolutions; since he appears to consider them as applicable to all the devout members of the Church; whereas the third is purely exceptional, and certainly not an advance upon the spiritual status of the worthy communicant.

But to conclude. What we say respecting ministerial absolution is that it is, firstly, a perpetual declaration of the cardinal doctrine of the forgiveness of sin through our Lord Jesus Christ; secondly, an assurance of the same to all who believe, repent, and confess their sins before God; and thirdly, that the two absolutions in the daily prayers and in the Communion Service are a sufficient provision for all who will in faith appropriate them. So thought Hooker:—

"What reason is there every man should not, under the general terms of confession, represent to himself his own particulars whatsoever, and adjoining thereunto that affection which a contrite spirit worketh, embrace to as full effect the words of Divine grace, as if the same were severally and particularly uttered with additions of prayers, imposition of hands, or all the ceremonies and solemnities that might be used for the strengthening of men's affiance in God's particular mercy towards *them*?

"If with us there be truth in the inward parts, the difference of general and particular forms in confession

and absolution is not so material that any man's safety or ghostly good should depend upon it."

It would be well if we could return to the simple pretensions and practice of the primitive Church, and it is a misfortune that we should still be so far departed from it as to retain in our Ordinal that sentence which was never found in any single Church for the first 1,200 years, the passage from John xx.: "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." Upon this sentence is the modern presumption built. Rome foisted it into her Ordinal 600 years ago, and we have, unhappily, retained it, though the Greek Church omits it. True that the words were intended on the part of our Reformers to apply to sins against the Church; but as long as there are men ready to exalt themselves by means of a supposed Divine commission to a position which their own gifts would not maintain, while others are willing to have their religion settled for them (to use a felicitous expression in Mr. Gladstone's recent pamphlet) "by power of attorney," we must expect the repetition of such discords as are now threatening to rend asunder the Church of England. Is a return to the pure and simple principles of the Apostolic age impossible? Have we as a branch of Christ's Holy Catholic Church lost the spring of our youth and its *vis medicatrix*. So disastrous a thing we cannot admit, even though the leprosy of Rome has appeared on our surface. We cannot believe that the Holy Spirit is

withdrawn, or that a jealous God will remove our candlestick out of its place. We will shun the sentence of Pergamos and Thyatira, and repent and do the first works. And so amid the coming convulsions of the European commonwealth we shall be kept by that Presence which shall be upon our Zion and her assemblies, "a cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night."

NOTE.

I AM induced to append this note to the foregoing paper, to point out that we cannot exact from human compositions what we are entitled to assume of those which are Divine: namely, radical completeness and consistency. All Divine truth must be fundamentally harmonious; but human compositions, which are of necessity inferential, are subject to the partial comprehension of their composers. No one will predicate *inspiration* of the Prayer-book. At the best it is the inferential teaching of good and devout men. It is probable, therefore, that some readers may dissent from the foregoing interpretation of the Visitation Office. But whatever view they take of the Absolution, it must be one of two: *i.e.*, either conditional or judicial. If the former, it is in strict harmony with the other two forms: if the latter, it must relate only to offences against the second table, or it contradicts its own preamble.

Let me add the parallel form of Absolution used by the Romish Communion in this country, as given by Dr. Newman in his *Apologia*:—

"May our Lord Jesus Christ absolve thee. And by His authority I absolve thee from every bond of excommunication and interdict, *so far as is in my power*, and so far as you need. Therefore I absolve thee," etc.

They who would plead for more than this in our Visitation Office are surely "*ipsis Romanis Romaniores.*"

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